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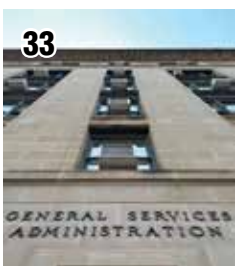

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Monthly Magazine, Weekly Report

Yes, just three issues from now, *The New American*, now published twice per month, will become a monthly publication.

Transitioning the print *TNA* to a monthly is actually the second phase of our plans to make the magazine more useful for our subscribers. Our first phase you should already have noticed, though we have not identified it as such in these pages until now. That is the February launch of our new *Insider Report*, which is being emailed free of charge — and will continue to be emailed free of charge — to all *TNA* subscribers as part of their subscription.

Until now, *TNA* magazine has offered our readers an unusual amalgamation of a news magazine, which normally is published every week, and a more in-depth journal, which normally is published monthly or less frequently. Though this hybrid approach has worked well for us in the past, we believe we can serve our subscribers even better by focusing on news development in one publication, and providing a more in-depth understanding in another — with the frequency of each publication tailored to fit the specific purpose of that publication.

The weekly *Insider Report* is now doing a better job keeping our readers abreast of news developments than a monthly or even twice-a-month publication could ever hope to accomplish. It is also more up-to-the-moment when it reaches subscribers than a physical publication can be, because it is neither printed (which takes time) nor sent through the mail stream (which takes more time). In fact, *Insider Report*, sent to *TNA* subscribers in the form of a PDF every Friday, reaches subscribers instantly.

Besides reporting important news developments, it also offers an inside scoop on what's *really* going on behind those developments — hence the name, *Insider Report*!

We have been getting great feedback regarding the *Insider Report* since its debut in February. And we fully anticipate receiving much additional positive feedback when the new monthly version of *The New American* magazine makes its own grand entrance in July.

First of all, the monthly *TNA* will have more pages (72 instead of the usual 48), more features, and a fresh new look. Secondly, because of the additional space, it will be able to provide a better understanding of political, cultural, and social trends, and what can be done to reverse the bad ones and help make our world a better place.

Moreover, we'd be remiss if we did not also announce, on this occasion, that our premiere monthly issue of *TNA* — which will have a July 2025 cover date — will be devoted to the globalist/United Nations threat, as well as what can be done to preserve and restore American freedom and independence. You'll not want to miss this one — or any other upcoming monthly issue of *TNA*.

Nor, we strongly suspect, will you want to miss out on our weekly *Insider Report* — at least not after you've seen an installment or two. So, first, if you are a *TNA* subscriber but have not seen it in your inbox, please check your junk folder to see if it may be showing up there. If yes, problem solved; if no, please call our customer service department at 1-800-727-8783 to make sure we have your current email address. On the other hand, if you are not already subscribing to *TNA*, please call the same number to subscribe. Like all other subscribers, you will receive *Insider Report* as part of your subscription.

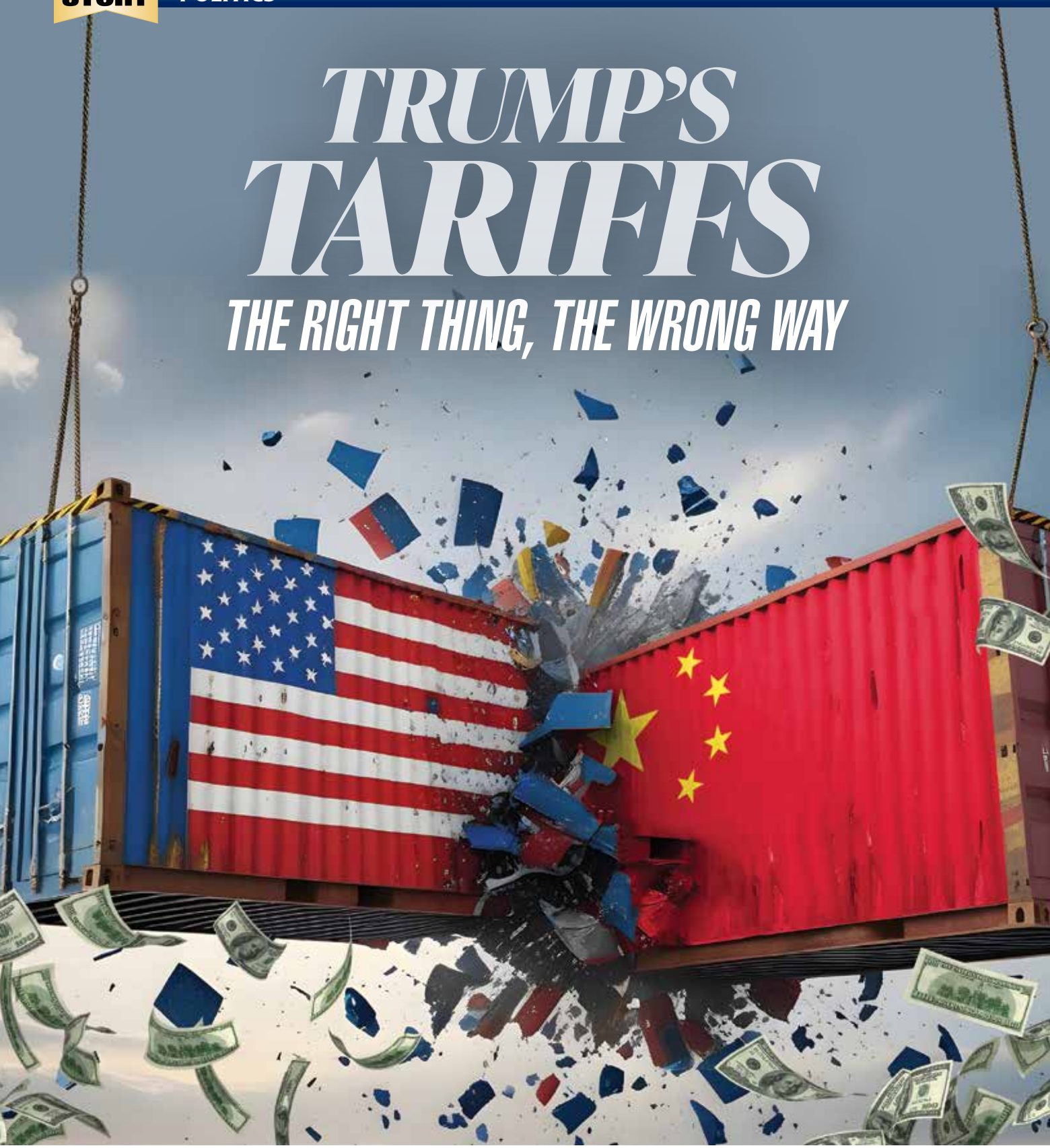
* * *

About this issue: If you did a double-take when you saw the headline on the cover of this issue, that's hardly surprising. *"Trump's Tariffs: The Right Thing ..."*? Aren't tariffs a tax, and don't taxes disincentivize whatever is taxed? Of course. But if some revenue is needed to fund the *legitimate* functions of the U.S. government, the big question that needs to be asked is: Are tariffs a better way of raising tax revenue than (say) the income tax? *"Trump's Tariffs: ... The Wrong Way"*? The Constitution assigns the power to impose tariffs to Congress, not the president — and the fact that liberal Democrats have suddenly discovered the Constitution doesn't change that. As always, we let the chips fall where they may — and encourage you to read our cover-story articles.

— *Gary Benoit*

TRUMP'S TARIFFS

THE RIGHT THING, THE WRONG WAY



Are President Trump's tariffs good or bad? The truth is that tariffs, when used correctly, are the least-intrusive form of taxation, but they should be enacted by Congress.

by Steve Bonta

Not since the 1930s has the subject of tariffs stirred such bitter controversy. The monumental Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 having become the official scapegoat for the Great Depression, the custodians of Acceptable Thought have long relegated tariffs to the ash heap of discredited ideas. Tariffs, bleats the commentariat unceasingly, are one of those quaint ideas of early American bumpkins that have been shown by sophisticated modern economics to be incompatible with free trade and amiable international relations.

Quite a number of the pioneering partisans of liberty, including Frédéric Bastiat, Ludwig von Mises, and Richard Cobden, were opposed to tariffs, and many modern-day libertarians, conservatives, and others with a penchant for limited government agree with them.

On the other hand, tariffs were and are opposed with equal ferocity by the Left. Already in the 19th century, Marxists and Fabian socialists alike excoriated tariffs as tools of the wicked capitalist, and that antipathy has only grown with time. As Karl Marx himself wrote in 1848:

> The system of protective tariffs places in the hands of the capital of one country the weapons which enable it to defy the capital of other countries; it increases the strength of this capital in opposition to foreign capital, and at the same time it deludes itself that the very same means will make that same capital small and weak in opposition to the working class.

Statements such as this have prompted even the likes of *Reason*, a libertarian magazine, to claim that Marx, an alleged champion of free trade, understood the subject better than Donald Trump. In 2019, *Reason's* Damon Root observed that "Marx had a number of positive things to say about what we now call globalization," and recommended that Trump "spend a little time studying Karl Marx" to cure his ignorance on free trade.

But tariffs met with nearly unanimous approval from at least one reputable school of thought: the American Founders. Almost to a man, the Founders regarded tariffs as the least objectionable form of taxation, at least as far as the United States was concerned. Tariffs became the primary source of revenue for the federal government, and remained so until well into the 20th century, during which time America and her economy grew as no country in prior history.

AP Images

The tariff man cometh: Trump announced sweeping new tariffs on "Liberation Day," April 2. The potential benefits of a tariff-based revenue system are many, and Trump deserves credit for rehabilitating tariffs after nearly a century of neglect.

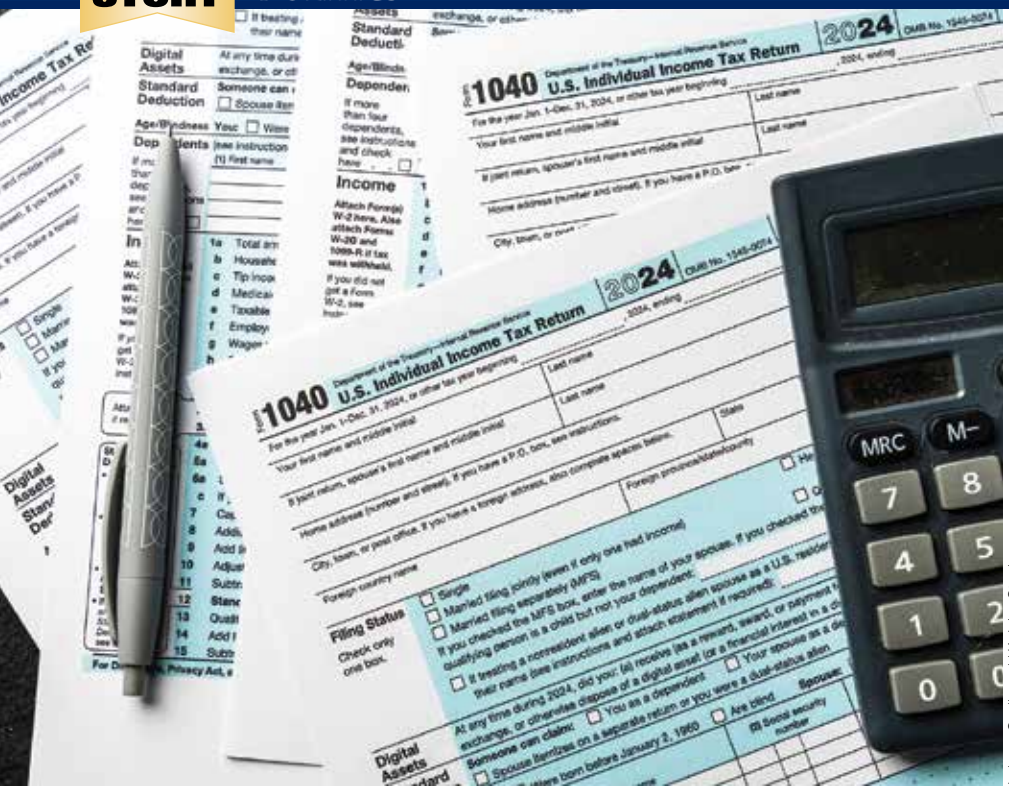
With his full-throated advocacy of tariffs, President Trump is a voice from another age, urging as he does a return to a tariff-centered system of federal revenue collection, instead of the modern fiscal model of heavy direct taxation coupled with money creation. Trump and his supporters have portrayed tariffs as a panacea for many of America's economic, financial, and political ills. But are they right?

Beware of Selfish Pleading

If the legacy media is to be believed, the new Trump tariffs have infuriated Wall Street billionaires, as well as, by some accounts, Trump's right-hand man, Elon Musk. The concerns are as hackneyed as they are self-serving: Tariffs, it has long been argued, far from having a punitive effect on foreign governments or economic competitors, fall wholly on domestic consumers. There is more than a little truth to this, at least in the short run. But such protests are being voiced the loudest by many contemporary titans of industry who have benefited handsomely by being able to offshore production to China and elsewhere. When a Ray Dalio or an Elon Musk criticizes tariffs against China, for example, it must be borne in mind that theirs are not the voices of dispassionate reason but of what economist Henry Hazlitt once called "the special pleading of selfish interests." Pro-free trade economists, who ordinarily are quick to detect such special pleadings, often have a blind spot where tariffs are concerned; they tend to assume that only pro-tariff special interests are susceptible to selfishness. However, the beneficiaries of the tariff-less system of misnamed "free trade" are just as apt to favor a status quo that benefits them, regardless of the consequences for the economy, national security, or the livelihoods of American workers.

The status quo that our captains of industry are defending is not new, as Trump is quick to point out. For the entirety of living memory, and most definitively since the end of World War II, the United States has generally avoided levying significant tariffs. To exert policy pressure on foreign governments, modern American political elites have favored trade sanctions and boycotts over tariffs. To raise revenue, the modern federal government uses direct taxation such as the income tax, as well as

Steve Bonta is publisher of The New American.



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Tax tyranny: For all the indignant voices in the legacy media opposing Trump's tariffs, we have never heard comparable outrage directed at the heavy progressive income taxes that have kept Americans in serfdom for more than a century.

deficit spending and monetary expansion. Even as most of the rest of the world maintains heavy tariffs on American goods, our policy, until very recently, has been not to respond in kind but to leave our doors wide open for foreign trade and investment.

At the same time, many of the supposed advocates of free trade push for ever-higher taxes and ever-greater regulatory burdens to be imposed on domestic producers, thus incentivizing international economic growth while discouraging it at home. The result has been predictable: Over the last several decades, there has been a veritable stampede of American corporations rushing to offshore their production to countries where bureaucratic red tape and taxes are more amenable to business than in the United States.

Despite how the debate has been framed, tariffs are not merely, or even primarily, an economic issue; they have profound political, societal, and constitutional ramifications that must be taken into account for a fully informed picture of this contentious subject.

Tariffs and the Constitution

First of all, we need to consider tariffs in the context of the U.S. Constitution. That tariffs writ large are constitutional is beyond dispute — but, as Article I, Section 8 makes clear, they are, like other forms of taxation, the exclusive prerogative of Congress. In the very first clause of that section, Congress is delegated the power to "lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises" — which, of course, includes tariffs. Not only that, two clauses later, Congress is also empowered to "regulate Commerce with foreign Nations."

And tariffs are not merely another broad menu of revenue-raising options available; for the Framers of the Constitution, tariffs were the form of taxation most congruent with limited government. This is because tariffs are an indirect form of taxation that is ultimately elective in character. Absent market distortions from government activity, American industry will tend to produce most needed goods, with foreign-manufactured goods being restricted to luxury items and other exotica. And while it may be true that modern American consumers benefit from, say, fresh fruits and vegetables being available year-round thanks to imports from warmer climes, this is not the case with manufactured items such as cars, machinery, tools, lumber, medical supplies, munitions, aircraft, computers, chips, and so forth. All of these, and much more besides, could and should be profitably manufactured in the United States, a state of affairs that requires only drastic tax and regulatory reforms to bring about.

As we at *The New American* have been (until very recently) almost alone in pointing out, presidential tariffs such as those that Trump has been imposing willy-nilly are completely unconstitutional. The executive branch's power over revenue is limited to the president's signing bills of appropriation and taxation into law or vetoing them if he sees fit. And that includes levies in the form of tariffs. Up to the infamous Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, this was how tariffs were always enacted.

The modern conceit that presidents can levy tariffs at will and without congressional say-so dates, as with so much of illegitimate Big Government, to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. In June 1934, Congress passed the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, which gave FDR and all successive presidents the authority to change tariff rates by up to 50 percent. Implicit in the bill's passage was that FDR and his successors could be trusted to phase out tariffs in favor of income and other direct taxes (such as corporate taxes and capital gains taxes), as well as the deft new financing trick of deficit spending coupled with inflation. The New Dealers' Brave New World, after all, was really just a warmed-over implementation of the communist program in Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. That document urged for the creation of a proto-communist order in which an all-encompassing leviathan state was financed by a heavy, progressive income tax and a central bank with a monopoly over the money supply. In such a world, tariffs were to become an anachronistic afterthought — which is why tariffs have always been discouraged by Marxists.

But, in order to guarantee the Marxist outcome of endless inflation coupled with heavy, progressive, direct taxation, the power over tariffs needed to be taken from Congress and reassigned to a pliant executive branch.

Until Trump, the Marxist grift worked perfectly. Every one of FDR's successors, Democratic and Republican alike, faithfully hued to the anti-tariff mantra. Most ordinary Americans remain blissfully ig-

norant of how stridently tariffs have been attacked by Marxists, Fabian socialists, and their ilk as paramount tools of capitalist and imperialist domination.

Now, of course, Trump's many enemies, including a few Senate Republicans, are trying to pass legislation to take the tariff power away from him. In the House, H.R. 2665, the Trade Review Act of 2025, was introduced on April 8 with bipartisan sponsorship. Said Representative Jeff Hurd (R-Colo.), one of the bill's sponsors:

> As a constitutional conservative, I am proud to co-lead the Trade Review Act of 2025, reasserting our congressional responsibility in imposing tariffs. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution is clear: "The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises." This isn't a political issue for me. I believe Congress must reclaim its constitutionally mandated authority, and I would support this measure regardless of who is in the White House.

Added Representative Don Bacon (R-Neb.):

> The Constitution clearly gives the authority for taxes and tariffs to Congress, but for too long, we have handed that authority to the executive branch. This is less about the actual tariffs laid by the Trump Administration, some of which I support because they are reciprocal, but more a commitment to uphold the Constitution. Congress has the power of the purse. Our Founders created checks and balances for a reason.

Fine rhetoric, to be sure, and, in the case of freshman congressman Hurd, for whom we have no legislative data points yet, the professed solicitude for the Constitution may prove genuine. In the case of his GOP colleague Don Bacon, however, it is worth noting that his cumulative voting record has yielded a Freedom Index score of only 47 percent (with his most recent, the 118th Congress, being an abysmal 35 percent), putting him firmly in RINO territory. Nevertheless, both are right: The U.S. president has zero constitutional authority to impose tariffs — and Congress had no authority to delegate to the executive branch powers conferred by the Constitution to the legislative.

As for the Democratic co-sponsors of the bill, Representative Gregory Meeks of New York had this to say:

> For too long, presidents have wielded tariffs as political weapons rather than strategic tools. The Trade Review Act restores constitutional checks and balances by ensuring Congress has a voice before American families are hit with higher costs. If a president wants to raise taxes on the American people through tariffs, they should be required to explain why — and get Congressional approval to do it.

This has long been the posture of the Left, that presidents ought to have authority over tariffs, but that they should be used "strategically" rather than being "weaponized" — whatever those vacuous terms might mean. But in reality, "constitutional checks and balances" are not susceptible to congressional innovation; the checks and balances brought to bear on the congressional prerogative of levying taxes and spending money are simple: The president may veto any spending legislation he does not like, raising the bar for congressional passage. Congress, for its part, may ignore any and all presidential spending proposals, suggestions for levies, and so forth — or it may take them under advisement. But as Congressman Bacon correctly observed, Congress (and more specifically, the House), and not the president, has the power of the purse.

Tariffs and Politics

As for the politics of tariffs, Trump is mostly right, even if he is exercising the power illegitimately. America *is* getting ripped off by the likes of Canada, Mexico, Europe, and China. All of these, and many others besides, have huge tariffs on American goods, tariffs that, somehow, nobody in the Establishment finds at all objectionable. This double standard is traceable on the Left to the dogma that, because America is so much unjustly richer than everybody else, tariffs help to level the playing field and redistribute global wealth. For many on the so-called Right who are devoted to the cause of "free trade," tariffs are inhibitive of economic growth, and should be eschewed on principle, even if other countries refuse to do so.

Both of these strands of argument completely miss two critical points, which Trump and at least some of his epigones,

AP Images

Constitutional tariffs: H.R. 2665, the Trade Review Act of 2025, was recently introduced in the House. The bill would reassert congressional authority over tariffs. Representatives Jeff Hurd (R-Colo.) and Don Bacon (R-Neb.) are supporters of the bill.

such as Peter Navarro, are trying to make, namely:

1) *Governments need some source of revenue, and tariffs are the least intrusive form of taxation (or, as Winston Churchill might have put it, tariffs are the worst form of taxation except for all the others).* Otherwise put: If not tariffs, then what forms of taxation should be preferred in order to fund a limited government? Income taxes, graduated or otherwise? Perhaps some form of standardized poll tax? Capital gains taxes? Inflation? A uniform national sales tax, perhaps?

This last (usually billed as a "flat tax") has often been trotted out by "respectable" conservatives as an alternative to the income tax, while tariffs are seldom advocated. But such a national sales tax would be unavoidable for consumers, and most proposals advocate for very high rates, such as 10 or 15 percent. Tariffs, by contrast, are elective, once domestic production has attained proper levels: You only pay them if you opt to buy foreign goods for their cachet, their luxury, etc.

But, cries the anti-tariff faction, tariffs are protectionist, and the international division of labor is just the free market optimizing the production of goods! They ask: Would you put tariffs on mango importers and encourage Americans to grow tropical fruit in greenhouses instead, at much higher cost and lower quality? These types of hyperbolic arguments ignore the fact that the vast majority of offshored industry in our time has not been pushed away because the climate or natural resources elsewhere are better; they have left because political conditions have incentivized them to do so. Else how can it be explained that, in spite of the vast distance and cost involved in trans-Pacific shipping, in spite of the constant need of language training and training in Western business practices, in spite of the risk cost of doing business in countries with fickle authoritarian or even communist governments — in spite of these and many other factors, it *still* has become more economical for American corporations to sink vast resources into building and maintaining manufactories in China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and elsewhere overseas, only to ship the finished products all the way back to Walmart shelves in the American heartland? This has occurred over the last several decades because taxes and regulations have made it prohibitively expensive and time-consuming to set up or continue to operate on American soil. It is certainly *not* because conditions for manufacturing quality and efficiency in China and elsewhere are somehow vastly superior to those in the United States. Thus, the "mangoes in a greenhouse" canard is a straw-man argument where most economic activity is concerned.

2) *All products are not created equal.* In particular, manufacturing capacity (or lack thereof) has a severe impact on national security. Like it or not, trading with enemy regimes can result in the transfer of critical military technology, or can lead to said regimes using their control over critical products such as pharmaceuticals or rare earth elements to exact concessions. We should have learned this during the Covid era, when we found ourselves dependent on China for medical supplies. Less recently, it was trade concessions to China in the mid-1990s that resulted in their acquisition from American aerospace corporations the technology to build working ICBMs that now threaten us. So, trade in tropical fruit, or tchotchkes like the inventory on Temu, is one thing, but trade in critical technology and supplies is quite another.

AP Images

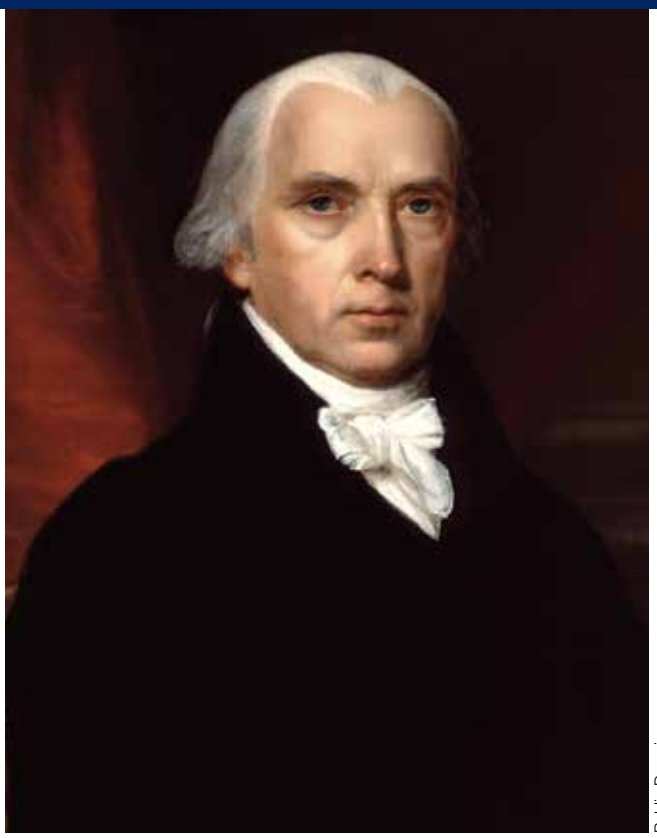
Offshore: America's tariff-less fiscal policies, along with the globalization of trading regulations under the World Trade Organization, have driven most domestic manufacturing overseas.

The Economics of Tariffs

What about the economic ramifications of tariffs? Strictly speaking, tariffs — like all forms of taxation — do dampen and divert economic energies. But the proper question is whether they do so to a greater degree than the other forms of taxation mentioned previously. The verdict of history appears to be that they do not, at least where America is concerned. After all, the U.S. economy grew at an unexampled pace during the 19th century and well into the 20th, during the entire period when tariffs were the primary means of raising revenue. And that was during a time when the United States, unlike today, was in a state of near-constant war against the aboriginal population, and also fought a ruinous four-year civil war that dwarfed every other conflict in the 19th century aside from China's Taiping Rebellion. Many of the tariffs enacted during that period were contentious, to be sure (the "Tariff of Abominations" of 1828 in particular), and tariffs played a role in triggering the Civil War itself. But the gargantuan American systems of taxation and inflation of the 20th century enabled two world wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam

War, the Gulf War, countless other smaller wars worldwide, and the garrisoning of the entire planet by U.S. military forces.

It is important to note that the arguments on behalf of free trade, which the American Founders both understood and embraced, with reservations, were developed in the context of an early modern Europe divided into hundreds of different sovereign and quasi-sovereign states, including a large number of what today would be called "microstates." Few of these states enjoyed anything like the broad panoply of resources available to the inhabitants of the United States, then or now. Even today, in much of the Old World, from economic powerhouses in the Far East such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, through the Gulf States of the Middle East (not to mention Israel), to the myriad small and medium-sized countries that make up most of modern Europe, having insufficient national resources is the rule rather than the exception. And it bears adding that this same characterization applies even to the large states across Eurasia: Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, India, and China all have various geographic and demographic conditions that preclude prosperous self-sufficiency. Russia has energy but little arable land. China has arable land but no energy resources. India has arable land but is too hot for the cultivation of staples such as wheat. And so forth. Under the tyranny of Old World geography, free trade, often leading to customs unions, trading leagues, and the like, is more than an abstraction; it is an imperative for national survival.



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First tariff: Then-Congressman James Madison wrote and sponsored the Tariff Act of 1789, the first piece of legislation passed by Congress under the Constitution. Madison understood that tariffs were the least objectionable form of taxation, and would impose few hardships thanks to America's advantageous geography and climate.

The United States, singularly blessed with varied landforms; with huge stocks of critical resources such as wood, iron, and petroleum; with an enormous navigable river system; and with a mostly temperate climate, has the almost unique potential for complete national self-sufficiency. (By contrast, much of Canada is non-arable, while Mexico is too dry and mountainous for large-scale agriculture.) In this respect, only Argentina in the Western Hemisphere has comparably varied topography and climate. The Founders, even before the great territorial acquisitions of the 19th century, already had a sense of this. The original 13 states had vast amounts of timber, iron ore, and other metals, while both America's coastal and interior waters brimmed with fish. Farming was profitable from New England to the Deep South. Given the geographical advantages of the United States, the Founders perceived tariffs to be the least injurious form of taxation, since, in general, almost anything manufactured or otherwise produced abroad could equally be produced at home.

The First Tariff

Accordingly, the very first piece of legislation passed by Congress under the new Constitution was the Tariff Act of 1789. The act was written and sponsored by James Madison himself, the "father of the Constitution" and a congressman in the First U.S. Congress. President George Washington signed the tariff into law without hesitation, the very first instance of a major piece of legislation being created according to the process laid down by the U.S. Constitution. In its final form, the act included levies of 50 cents per ton on goods imported in foreign ships and 30 cents per ton on foreign goods imported in American ships. The tariffs were partly a response to years of trade discrimination by European powers, especially Great Britain, against the fledgling United States, discrimination whereby the major powers imposed heavy duties against American goods, or even barred American vessels altogether.

Even in 1789, there was disagreement over whether tariffs ought to be resorted to in order to protect domestic producers or merely as a means for raising revenue. In this debate, the verdict of economics is clear: protectionism is not a sound economic doctrine. It is, however, a defensible *political* doctrine, since certain indus-

Strictly speaking, tariffs — like all forms of taxation — do dampen and divert economic energies. But the proper question is whether they do so to a greater degree than the other forms of taxation mentioned previously. The verdict of history appears to be that they do not, at least where America is concerned.

In sum: Trump's tariffs are, in the main, the right thing being done the wrong way. Besides being a robust exercise in the much-neglected virtues of national independence and self-reliance, tariffs are a rebuke to the cause of "world order."

AP Images

Sticker shock: The Trump tariffs will drive prices up in the short run. But, unlike direct taxes such as the income tax, tariffs can be avoided by restricting consumption. And in the longer run, they will lead to a re-shoring of our manufacturing.

tries may well be considered indispensable to national defense or self-reliance. Thus, while it may be true that a tariff imposed on imported medical supplies amounts to a tax on domestic consumers, who are then forced to pay more, is it really wise policy to allow chains of production to become so internationalized that we no longer have the ability to produce medical supplies domestically? Or automobiles? Or farm machinery? Or advanced weaponry? Or ships? Or any number of other items indispensable to national well-being? There are no easy answers to such questions, which is why the levying of tariffs is best entrusted to the deliberative process of legislation, as the Founders intended.

That tariffs are not in fact the economic tactical nuke that their detractors claim them to be is amply borne out by American economic history. The American economy grew like no other in history throughout the era when tariffs were the main source of government revenue. Not coincidentally, that era also predated the era of modern fiat currency, of the modern regulatory behemoth, and of modern income taxes, corporate taxes, FICA taxes, and capital gains taxes — all of which depress and disincentivize economic growth far more than the lowly tariff ever did.

At the time of this writing, all of the dire prognostications of a stock-market crash have failed to materialize. This is because, for all of their financial adroitness, Wall Street elites do not, in the main, understand how the real economy works — the economy in which regular people get dirty making stuff that people actually use.

If there is a crucial lesson from our own history that we have so far failed to internalize, it is this: If we prioritize economics over political principles, we end up with a financial oligarchy that serves up cheap material goodies while keeping most Americans in lifelong economic and political bondage (i.e., the system that we now have). If, on the other hand, we prioritize political principles over economics, as most of the Founders did, we end up with good government, along with unrivalled economic strength as a bonus.

In sum: Trump's tariffs are, in the main, the right thing being done the wrong way. Besides being a robust exercise in the much-neglected virtues of national independence and self-reliance, tariffs are a rebuke to the cause of "world order." But bringing back the tariff system should not be undertaken in isolation. We should also jettison the income tax, the capital gains tax, and all other such taxes; bring back gold and silver money; and eliminate the Federal Reserve. Only then can tariffs truly be re-enshrined as the chief source of federal revenue.

Moreover, this should all be done by Congress, with the support of the president, as it was done in 1789, instead of the other way around. If tariffs continue to be levied on President Trump's initiative alone, it is almost assured that, the moment Trump leaves office, Congress will fall over itself to restore the old order of extortionate income taxes, irresponsible deficit spending, gratuitous inflation, punitive regulation — and nary a tariff to be seen. ■

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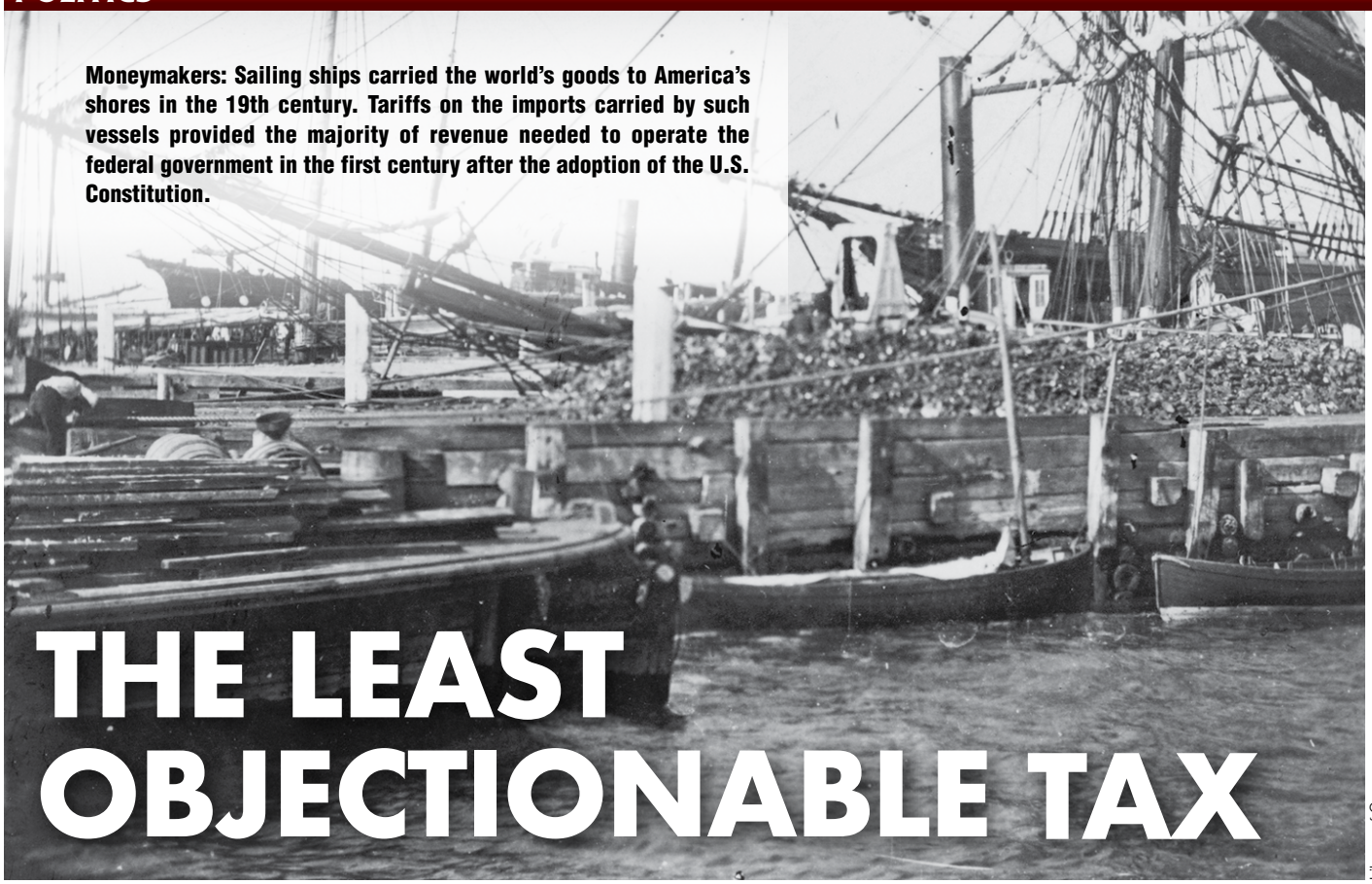


Moneymakers: Sailing ships carried the world's goods to America's shores in the 19th century. Tariffs on the imports carried by such vessels provided the majority of revenue needed to operate the federal government in the first century after the adoption of the U.S. Constitution.

Library of Congress

THE LEAST OBJECTIONABLE TAX

Knowing that a source of revenue was needed for the legitimate expenses of the federal government, the Founding Fathers wisely chose tariffs as the least onerous form of taxation.

by Thomas R. Eddlem

This article originally appeared in the February 26, 2001 issue of The New American. *Its review of what the Founding Fathers had to say about tariffs is as relevant today as it was the day it was written — perhaps more so, considering that President Trump has ratcheted up tariffs, and the debate over tariffs and who should impose them is now raging in the headlines.*

Reporting back from the constitutional convention of 1787, Connecticut delegates Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth informed their governor that the proposed new Constitution would give the federal Congress the power to tax for the first time. "It is probable that the principal branch of revenue will be duties on imports [that is, tariffs]," Sherman and Ellsworth explained in a September 26, 1787 letter to Governor Samuel Huntington. "What may be necessary to be raised by direct taxation is to be apportioned on the several states, according to the number of their inhabitants; and although Congress may raise the money by their own authority, if necessary, yet that authority need not be exercised, if each state will furnish its quota."

Sherman and Ellsworth, as it turned out, were only half right. From the time the Constitution went into effect in 1789, until the advent of the current income tax in 1913, the tariff served as the main, and oftentimes the only, source of federal revenue during peacetime. But when direct taxes were needed for war, or to pay war debt, the federal government typically collected direct taxes with its own revenue agents rather than giving the states the option to volunteer up their portion.

The "direct taxes" referred to by Sherman and Ellsworth have long been generally defined by economists as those imposed directly upon persons or property. By way of contrast, "indirect taxes" are levied upon conditional actions (such as goods being imported or retail sales) and are — at least theoretically — avoidable. The U.S. Constitution empowers the Congress "to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises" on behalf of the national treasury, with the word "taxes" referring to direct taxes and the terms "duties, imposts and excises" referring to all forms of indirect taxation. With the exception of a ban on the taxation of exports (Article I, Section 9), the only explicit constitutional restrictions on the federal imposition of taxes are in how they must be collected. Direct taxes are limited by a state quota system: "Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states," meaning that the total amounts collected in each state must correspond proportionately with the state's population and representatives in Congress. And indirect taxes must be

Thomas R. Eddlem was director of The John Birch Society's research department.

"uniform throughout the United States," meaning that Congress can not tax sugar at three percent in Virginia and five percent in Pennsylvania.

Although the Constitution allows great latitude for the imposition of taxes, all monies collected may only be expended in connection with constitutionally authorized powers. Modern-day Americans may wonder how the U.S. government was once able to subsist on tariffs alone. Yet when it did so it did not partake in all the budget-busting unconstitutional programs it does today.

Abraham Lincoln explained that the "tariff is the cheaper system because the duties, being collected in large parcels at a few commercial points, will require comparatively few officers in their collection; while by the direct-tax system, the land must be literally covered with assessors and collectors, going forth like swarms of Egyptian locusts...."

Indirect Taxes

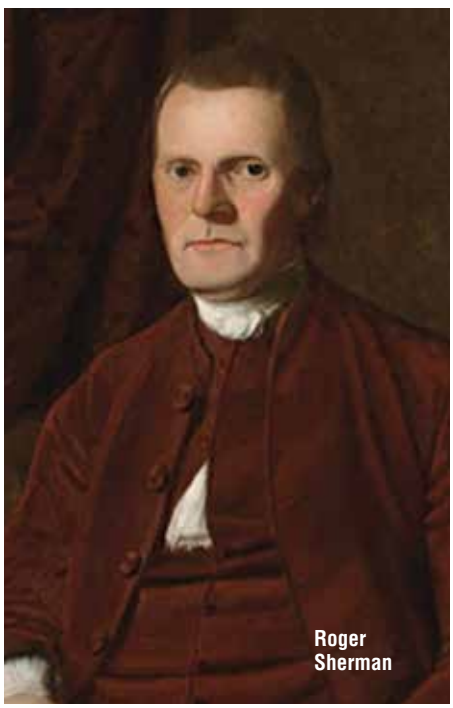
As predicted by Sherman and Ellsworth, one of the first acts of the first Congress in 1789 was to pass a tariff bill. James Madison, generally acknowledged as the primary author of the Constitution, remarked during debate on that first tariff bill that "the deficiency in our treasury has been too notorious to make it necessary for me to animadvert upon that subject. Let us content ourselves with endeavoring to remedy that evil. To do this a national revenue must be obtained; but the system must be such a one, that, while it secures the object of revenue, it shall not be oppressive to our constituents. Happy it is for us that such a system is within our power; for I apprehend that both these objects may be obtained from an impost on articles imported into the United States."

Although the tariff was often justifiably criticized for its excesses by numerous early Americans, Madison realized that the tariff had a number of advantages over other forms of taxation. The first of these advantages was privacy for the common citizen. The new federal government was forced to enact a direct tax and several excise taxes in order to pay off the debt from the War for Independence. That goal achieved, by the end of the first Jefferson administration the federal government was running entirely on revenue from the tariff. Thomas Jefferson was able to boast at his second inaugural address that the federal government was entirely funded by tariffs and that therefore "it may be the pleasure and pride of an American to ask 'What farmer, what mechanic, what laborer ever sees a taxgatherer of the United States?'"

The tariff was not selected as the main federal tax because it was the only tax known to the Founders. Sales taxes, income taxes, and other invasive taxes were well-known to them. The British had imposed an income tax during the Napoleonic Wars, but the allure of the income tax made no headway in the United States. When he was still a little-known Whig congressman, Abraham Lincoln explained the advantages of the tariff over other taxes. The "tariff is the cheaper system," he said, "because the duties, being collected in large parcels at a few commercial points, will require comparatively few officers in their collection; while by the direct-tax system, the land must be literally covered with assessors and collectors, going forth like swarms of Egyptian locusts, devouring every blade of grass and other green thing." Lincoln's apt depiction of revenue agents as locusts certainly fits the profile of today's federal Internal Revenue Service.

Free Trade and Tariffs

Although raising federal revenue by a tariff is often attacked today as being contrary to economics and the principles of "free trade," especially among supporters of international trade regimes such as NAFTA and the WTO, the tariff is no more contrary to economic efficiency than any other tax. Every form of taxation has a negative impact on the economic activity it is applied to. Tariffs and other forms of indirect taxes discourage consumption. But by discouraging consumption, they encourage savings. Moreover, as Alexander Hamilton explained in *The Federalist*, No. 21, they even allow each citizen to set his own level of taxation to some extent:


Roger Sherman

Oliver Ellsworth

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> Imposts, excises, and, in general, all duties upon articles of consumption, may be compared to a fluid, which will in time find its level with the means of paying them. The amount to be contributed by each citizen will in a degree be at his own option, and can be regulated by an attention to his resources. The rich may be extravagant, the poor can be frugal; and private oppression may always be avoided by a judicious selection of objects proper for such impositions.

How different this approach is from income taxes, which not only discourage the creation and accumulation of wealth but require swarms of tax collectors. It is not surprising, therefore, that classical free trade economists have generally favored indirect taxes such as tariffs over direct taxes such as our modern income tax. Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* that "to subject every private family to the odious visits and examination of the tax-gatherers, in the same manner as we subject the keepers of alehouses and the brewers for public sale, would be altogether inconsistent with liberty." Raising tax revenue by imposition of a tariff is not "protectionist" or "isolationist" in the economic sense. To the contrary, a revenue tariff (like other forms of indirect taxation) requires vigorous trade in order to accomplish its purpose — that of raising revenue. It tends toward moderation in its application, as Hamilton pointed out in *The Federalist*, No. 21:

> It is a signal advantage of taxes on articles of consumption that they contain in their own nature a security against excess. They prescribe their own limit, which cannot be exceeded without defeating the end proposed — that is, an extension of the revenue. When applied to this object, the saying is as just as it is witty that, "in political arithmetic, two and two do not always make four." If duties are too high, they lessen the consumption; the collection is eluded; and the product to the treasury is not so great as when they are confined within proper and moderate bounds. This forms a complete barrier against any material oppression of the citizens by taxes of this class, and is itself a natural limitation of the power of imposing them.

Of course, in the era of the income tax, the federal government does not have to rely on revenue tariffs to the same extent that it did in the past, and therefore does not have to be as concerned about eluding the collection.

efasein/Adobe Stock

Global marketplace: Multilateral trade deals such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States, Canada, and Mexico replaced the old tariff system. They are a step toward globalization and an end to economic sovereignty.

Hamilton was one of the few Founding Fathers favorably disposed toward economic protectionism. Most of the Founding Fathers, though, accepted the principles of free trade as a general economic doctrine. James Madison, for example, aptly summed up the free trade philosophy of most of the Founders during debate on the 1789 tariff bill when he noted: "I … hold it as a truth that commercial shackles are generally unjust, oppressive, and impolitic." But he also noted that "if industry and labor are left to take their own course, they will generally be directed toward those objects which are the most productive, and this in a more certain and direct manner than the wisdom of the most enlightened legislature could point out."

A singular advantage of the tariff over other taxes is the effect it has on strengthening national independence. "[E]ach nation should have within itself the means of defense, independent of foreign supplies: that in whatever relates to the operations of war, no State ought to depend upon a precarious supply from any part of the world," Madison noted in his speech on the first tariff bill. Years later, Madison wrote to his friend Joseph Cabell that "A nation leaving its foreign trade, in all cases, to regulate itself, might soon find it regulated by other nations, into a subserviency to a foreign interest. In the interval between the peace of 1783 and the establishment of the present Constitution of the United States, the want of a General authority to regulate trade is known to have had this consequence."

Many modern globalists boast that national economic dependency is a small price to pay for the great benefits of membership in the World Trade Organization's global marketplace. WTO Director-General Mike Moore trumpeted the progressive abolition of the revenue tariff under the WTO in an October 26, 2000 speech in Ottawa, Canada, despite admitting that nations are now less independent and secure. "Our lives are more closely linked with those of others across the globe. When Russia defaulted in 1998, the financial aftershocks meant Mexican homeowners had to pay higher mortgage rates. When South Korea's economy seized up, workers in Korean factories in Britain lost their jobs. Undeniably, this causes pain."

After America's disastrous depen-

dency upon foreign supplies was laid bare during the War of 1812, even vociferous free trader Thomas Jefferson counseled that utilizing a small amount of tariff protection under the revenue tariff would provide uninterrupted defense capacity in the event of war. Jefferson remarked in 1815 that the "prohibiting duties we lay on all articles of foreign manufacture which prudence requires us to establish at home … secures us against a relapse into foreign dependency." Likewise, Madison's experience in the War of 1812 influenced him to write in 1828: "It cannot be said that the manufactories, which could not support themselves in periods of peace, would spring up of themselves at the recurrence of war prices. It must be obvious to every one, that, apart from the difficulty of great and sudden changes of employment, no prudent capitalists would engage in expensive establishments of any sort, at the commencement of a war of uncertain duration, with a certainty of having them crushed by the return of peace."

Roscoe Conkling
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A nation can certainly circumvent the need for protective tariffs designed to conserve key domestic industries needed in time of war with the creation of larger military establishments and enormous stockpiles at great public expense. But America's Founding Fathers chose tariffs instead because they rightfully feared large standing armies and huge military establishments. The near abolition of the revenue tariff through multilateral trade agreements such as NAFTA and GATT/WTO has increased the necessity for a larger standing force. Sadly, many of America's policy-makers today have no objection to huge military establishments and non-stop foreign military interventionism. To the contrary, America's foreign policy elite often act as if perpetual war is a moral imperative.

Direct Taxes for War

During war, tariff revenues often dry up because international trade plummets. This happens despite the fact that the need for revenue is much greater during wartime than during times of peace. Therefore, the federal government is empowered to impose direct taxes. The first federal direct tax in 1798 was imposed and collected by federal agents. Levied upon land and slaves, the one-time tax retired the debt from the War for Independence. Unfortunately, Congress did not follow the expectations of Sherman and Ellsworth by giving states the option of volunteering up their share of the tax in lieu of federal collectors within their state. The federal government also collected its own direct taxes during and after the War of 1812, again without giving states the chance to avoid federal collectors imposing upon their citizens. Only one time in American history did Congress give the states the option to volunteer their quota of a direct tax. But that one exception, the direct tax of 1861, is worth looking at if Americans are serious about reinvigorating our national legacy of liberty.

As the federal government began to promulgate its war against Southern states that had seceded from the Union in 1861, it soon became apparent that the war would be tremendously costly and would require more revenue than that which tariffs and excises alone could generate. A progressive income tax was suggested by the Republican majority in the House. Though an income tax is really a tax on a person and is a direct tax, the proposal was labeled an "income duty" in the hopes of avoiding the constitutional requirement to apportion the tax among the states. Some noted on the floor of the House of Representatives that the income tax had been tremendously successful in helping England to raise the necessary revenue to carry on the Napoleonic wars. But one Republican had a better way of raising the revenue, a way that was in line with the thinking of the Founding Fathers. Representative Roscoe Conkling (R-N.Y.) suggested in floor debate: "I think it is desirable to avoid the necessity of this army of office-holders altogether. And therefore I have been struggling for an arrangement by which that smaller army of office-seekers, and less odious one, provided by the states themselves, shall avoid the necessity of such a provision on the part of the federal government." Citing the Massachusetts state ratifying convention, Conkling offered an amendment that would have allowed the states to volunteer up their portion of the $20 million direct tax and avoid the federal collectors. To encourage the states to volunteer their quota, a 10 percent discount in the total cost (which would have approximated the federal collection costs) was offered to the states. Conkling's amendment was adopted and became law, and the income tax was forestalled for another year. Congress did pass an income tax law the following year, and the first federal income tax remained in force until a campaign of businessmen and taxpayers forced its abolition in 1872. Strangely, though all of the states had volunteered their quota (except those that had seceded, of course) and Conkling's amendment had been considered a success, the Congress dropped the matter and has yet to take it up again. It is high time we put pressure on Congress to abolish the income tax and reapply those non-intrusive taxes that the nation's founders preferred. ■

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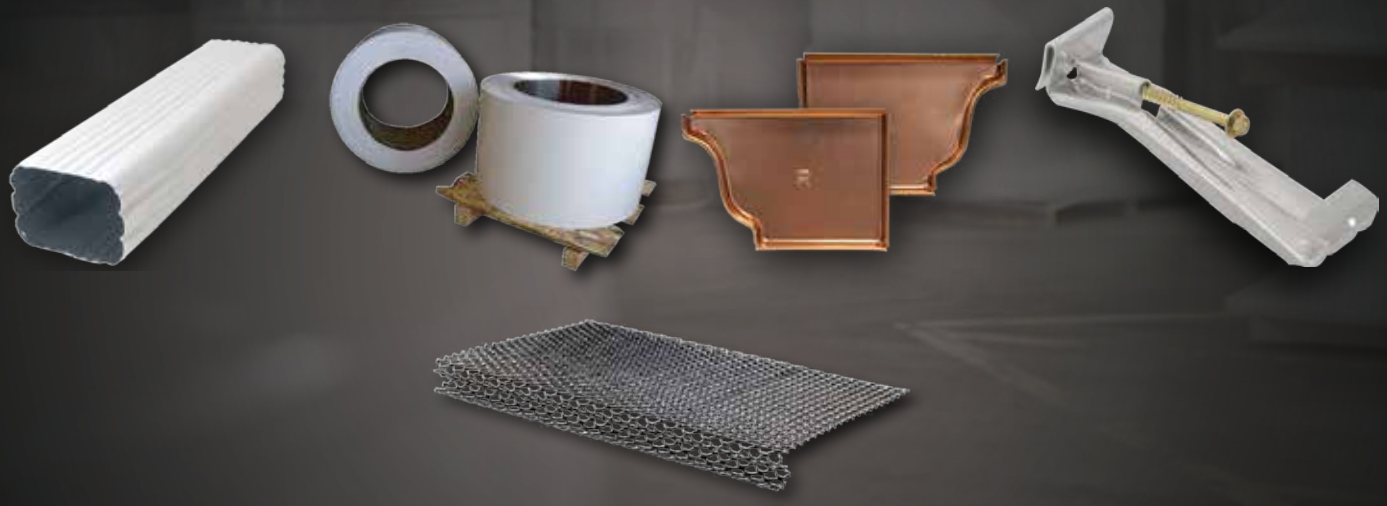

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QUICK QUOTES

"We must transform the way we think about water.... Water scarcity is the greatest challenge we face today, and we need to start recognizing water as a precious resource. Therefore, water should be better managed, should be better valued, and has to be better preserved."

Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, former CEO and chairman of Nestlé, has been named the interim chairman of the World Economic Forum following Klaus Schwab's resignation on April 21, 2025.

"You have, in this case, illegal aliens from Venezuela, sent here by Maduro, who are members of a foreign terrorist organization, Tren de Aragua, an organization that the intelligence community has found is operating at the direction of a hostile, adversarial foreign regime, carrying out criminal enterprises to destabilize the political system in the United States.... They're all illegal. They're all gang members. They're all foreign terrorists. And now we are being told that they cannot be expelled from our country without an extraordinary amount of individualized adjudication, at the district court, circuit court, Supreme Court — up and down, up and down, up and down. No American citizen receives this level of so-called due process — because it isn't due process. This is called infinity process to keep you here forever."

Homeland Security Advisor Stephen Miller appeared on Newsmax after SCOTUS blocked the deportation of illegal aliens/terrorists.

"Over the past 50 years, there has been an exponential increase in the rates of autism (e.g., it's gone from affecting 1 in 10,000 children to 1 in 31). This rapid increase suggests something is causing it, and more importantly, that it is absolutely urgent for us to figure out what that something is, as each autism case is immensely costly to society. This is not sustainable once it starts to affect a significant number of children. However, rather than identify that cause, the scientific community, for decades, has simply said 'we need more research' to figure out what it is (while simultaneously declaring it is definitely not vaccines, despite vaccines being by far the most probable culprit)."

The social-media influencer known as A Midwestern Doctor made this point on the Substack "The Forgotten Side of Medicine."

"Real ID isn't needed and won't stop terrorists from hijacking planes. Most of the 9/11 hijackers held Saudi, UAE, Egyptian, or Lebanese passports. Real ID is a national standard and database of IDs that is primarily a tool for control of Americans. Trump shouldn't enforce it."

Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) took to social media after Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem announced mandatory digital IDs required to fly or to enter federal buildings.

"There was no remorse on his face at all. This person took my daughter so violently and so gruesomely and so graphically that they sealed the pictures because I don't want my granddaughters to see these pictures. These are the kind of criminals President Trump wants to remove from our country. These are the kind of criminals that we need to remove from our country. We are American citizens. Why should we allow people like this — violent criminals that have no conscience at all — to murder our mothers, our sisters, our daughters?"

Patty Morin, whose 37-year-old daughter Rachel was brutally murdered in 2023 by an illegal alien from El Salvador, addressed a White House press conference in April.

— Compiled by Rebecca Terrell

miss irine/Adobe Stock

THE SAVE ACT
A Totalitarian Trojan Horse

The SAVE Act has been sold as a way to secure American elections. In truth, it's a Trojan horse for a national ID and federal control over elections.

by Joe Wolverton II, J.D.

On April 10, 2025, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 22, deceptively named the "Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act," under the pretense of protecting our elections from noncitizen interference. This is the House's second attempt to enact this bill; it passed identical legislation in July of last year. On the surface, this bill — proposed by Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas) — might seem like a rational response to voter fraud. But when examined through the lens of history, the Constitution, and common sense, the SAVE Act is exposed as a cunning Trojan horse designed not to preserve liberty, but to throttle it.

This legislation is not merely misguided; it is malevolent. It is a mask worn by the machinery of globalist consolidation, a legislative cancer metastasizing under the guise of electoral reform. The bill's requirement for documentary proof of citizenship — via amending the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (aka Motor Voter) — might appear harmless or even prudent, but history teaches us that tyrants rarely announce their intentions — they disguise them in "necessary measures" and "national security." As Patrick Henry warned, "Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel."

The SAVE Act is such an approach.

An "Act" Without Authority

At the heart of the SAVE Act is a terrifying irony: Congress is pretending to preserve the integrity of elections by violating the very structure that gives it legitimacy. There is no clause in the Constitution empowering the federal government to define citizenship beyond the original parameters. There is no clause granting Congress the right to federalize voter verification or mandate uniform ID standards across the several states. Every inch of this act oozes usurpation, cloaked in red-white-and-blue rhetoric.

As James Madison explained in *The Federalist*, No. 45, "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined." Voter qualifications were never among them. The power to set such standards was deliberately left in the hands of the states — the true sovereigns in our constitutional compact.

To allow Congress to dictate the nature and evidence of citizenship is to place a loaded weapon in the hands of the very men and women the Constitution was written to restrain. What the SAVE Act proposes is a shift not just in electoral procedure, but also in the very foundation of American federalism. If we cede to the central government the power to decide who is and isn't a citizen, what power could it possibly be denied?

The 14th Amendment and the False Foundation of the SAVE Act

Let us begin where the deception begins: the redefinition of citizenship. The SAVE Act rests on a fatally flawed interpretation of the 14th Amendment. Section 1 of that Amendment reads, in part: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."

Sound straightforward? It is anything but.

When the 14th Amendment was debated

Joe Wolverton II, J.D. is The John Birch Society's constitutional law scholar.

in Congress, its authors made abundantly clear that not everyone born on U.S. soil was to be considered a citizen. Senator Jacob Howard, who sponsored the citizenship clause, explicitly clarified that "jurisdiction" did not merely mean physical presence within our borders. He stated, "This will not, of course, include persons born in the United States who are foreigners, aliens, who belong to the families of ambassadors or foreign ministers."

In other words, merely being born in the United States does not confer citizenship if the parents owe allegiance to another sovereign — be it a tribal nation or a foreign government — or if they are unlawfully present. That was the original intent. That is the constitutional understanding. And that is what the SAVE Act so egregiously ignores.

By broadly declaring that anyone born on U.S. soil is a citizen — regardless of parental status — the SAVE Act spits in the face of constitutional fidelity. It opens the gates not to securing elections, but to allowing the children of illegal entrants — and even the children of foreign diplomats — to become voters in federal elections. In doing so, the act paves the way for foreign influence masquerading as domestic legitimacy.

Citizenship Is a Duty, Not a Document

The SAVE Act reduces citizenship to a matter of paperwork. It treats civic membership in the greatest experiment in self-government as something to be processed, filed, and confirmed by bureaucrats in Washington. But true citizenship cannot be captured on a form.

It is not the possession of a card or the production of a certificate that makes someone a citizen. It is allegiance. It is the conscious acceptance of the duties, traditions, and principles that underpin our Republic. The Founding Fathers understood this. That is why they rejected mere "birthright" as sufficient for political participation. They feared foreign influence not just militarily, but philosophically. As John Jay, our first chief justice, said in 1797, "Every nation ought to take measures not only for the protection, but for the purity of the national character."

What does it say of our national character when we hand out citizenship like a consolation prize and then tie the hands of those born here to parents who bled for this land? The SAVE Act is not a defense of citizenship, it is a desecration of it.

AP Images

Trojan horse: Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas) sponsored the SAVE Act as a safeguard against voter fraud, but, in truth, it's a Trojan horse for federal control over elections.

Foreign Influence Masquerading as Citizenship

What could possibly be more dangerous to a free republic than allowing our enemies — by way of their offspring — to vote in our elections?

Imagine a child born to Chinese nationals living illegally in California. That child, under the misapplied definition of citizenship promoted by the SAVE Act, would have every right to receive taxpayer-funded benefits, vote in federal elections, and influence the future of a nation to which his parents had no lawful allegiance.

Alexander Hamilton — yes, the same Hamilton the Broadway crowd romanticizes — warned in *The Federalist*, No. 68 that "every practicable obstacle should be opposed to cabal, intrigue, and corruption." Yet here we are in the 21st century, watching our Congress codify cabal and codify intrigue in the form of the SAVE Act. They call it "safeguarding elections," but what it truly does is sanctify sedition.

Burdening the Citizen While Blessing the Illegitimate

The defenders of the SAVE Act will say it's about making sure only citizens vote. But let's look closely at how they propose to do that.

The bill mandates documentary proof of citizenship for federal voter registration — an idea that might seem sensible until one considers its practical effects on actual American citizens. For example, women who have changed their last names due to marriage will now be subjected to an administrative nightmare to match records, obtain government-verified documents, and navigate a bureaucracy not designed to serve but to obstruct.

This isn't a safeguard — it's a snare.

Furthermore, this requirement won't be limited to new voters. It applies retroactively to already-registered voters who need to update their name or address. In short, law-abiding citizens are being forced to prove their innocence while those who break our laws are granted the benefit of the doubt. That is not the mark of a just system. It is the hallmark of tyranny.

Thomas Paine once said, "He that would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from oppression." But the SAVE Act does the opposite — it burdens the citizen and blesses the lawbreaker.

"Show Me Your Papers": The Dystopia at the Gates

Imagine a future not so far removed from our present: An American citizen goes to vote in his first federal election. He is turned away, not because he is ineligible, but because he lacks the precise documentation approved by the Department of Homeland Security. His birth certificate isn't "real" enough. His Social Security card is insufficient. His state-issued ID lacks the necessary digital watermark.

Now imagine this scenario repeating in airports, courthouses, government offices, and even online platforms. That's the world the SAVE Act advances — one where freedom is conditional, revocable, and always under review; where you must prove your humanity to the machine before being permitted to participate in the Republic.

This is not hypothetical. It is the logical end of every piece of legislation like the SAVE Act that pretends to "protect us" while paving the road to totalitarian control. The American people must learn once more that every government ID is a leash, and every central registry a cage.

REAL ID and the March Toward Digital Enslavement

Woven into the warp and woof of the SAVE Act is a silent accomplice: the REAL ID Act. Originally passed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the REAL ID was sold to the American people as a counterterrorism measure. But, like all government programs sold in fear, its true purpose lies elsewhere.

REAL ID is the linchpin of a looming digital identification regime. The Department of Homeland Security mandated compliance with this policy beginning May 7, 2025. Every American is now forced to carry a federally approved identification card in order to board a plane, enter a federal building, or engage in other basic functions of modern life.

And now, with the SAVE Act, we see the merger of voter ID requirements with REAL ID enforcement. You want to vote? Prove your citizenship with documents that just happen to align with REAL ID criteria. This is not a coincidence. It's coordination.

James Madison warned us about this in *The Federalist*, No. 47: "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands … may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

REAL ID is the federal government extending its hand into your wallet, your identity, and your liberty. It is the camel's nose under the tent of surveillance — and the SAVE Act gives it a chair at the table.

The Real Threat to Elections: Centralization

Supporters of the SAVE Act claim that federal intervention is necessary to stop noncitizens from influencing elections. But let's be clear: The greatest threat to electoral integrity in this country isn't coming from outside our borders — it's coming from the centralization of power within them.

It wasn't foreign nationals who flooded our elections with mail-in ballots and suspended constitutional processes under the cover of pandemic panic. It wasn't illegal immigrants who developed the software systems that now count our votes in darkness. It wasn't tribal loyalties from across the sea that poisoned our civic culture and shredded the trust of the electorate.

It was homegrown despots, cloaked in suits and sanctimony, who did that.

And now those same tyrants offer the SAVE Act as a cure to the disease they themselves unleashed. Like a thief offering to install a security system in the home he just robbed, Congress now asks us to surrender even more power in the name of protection.

No thank you.

The Constitution and the Compact Theory

As a constitutional scholar, let me say this plainly: The Constitution was not drafted to empower federal consolidation. It was crafted as a compact among sovereign states, a delegation of limited powers to a general government bound by chains.

The SAVE Act, like so many congressional monstrosities, ignores this fundamental truth. Rather than respecting the states' prerogative to determine voter eligibility and registration procedures, the act arrogates that authority to Washington, D.C.

In doing so, it is not just violating the spirit of the Constitution, it is also desecrating its letter. Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution states that "the Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature

AP Images

REAL ID: The federal surveillance scheme paving the way for digital tyranny is now weaponized by the SAVE Act to corral citizens into a national ID system.

thereof." Congress may alter these regulations only in exceptional circumstances, not as a matter of routine legislation.

To impose a one-size-fits-all voter identification mandate across all states, under penalty of disenfranchisement, is not just unconstitutional; it is unconscionable.

A Wake-up Call to State Legislatures

To the men and women serving in state legislatures across this Republic, I issue this charge: *nullify this monstrosity*. If the Senate passes the SAVE Act, it will fall to the sovereign states to interpose — to stand in the breach, to shield their citizens from the rising tide of federal despotism.

The states are not subsidiaries of Washington. They are not administrative units of a national bureaucracy. They are co-equal partners in a federal compact — and it is time they began acting like it.

Pass resolutions declaring your intent to reject federal attempts to commandeer your election procedures. Enact laws reaffirming your state's authority to define voter eligibility and protect your rolls from federal tampering. Make it clear — unmistakably clear — that you will not be complicit in the construction of a digital tyranny.

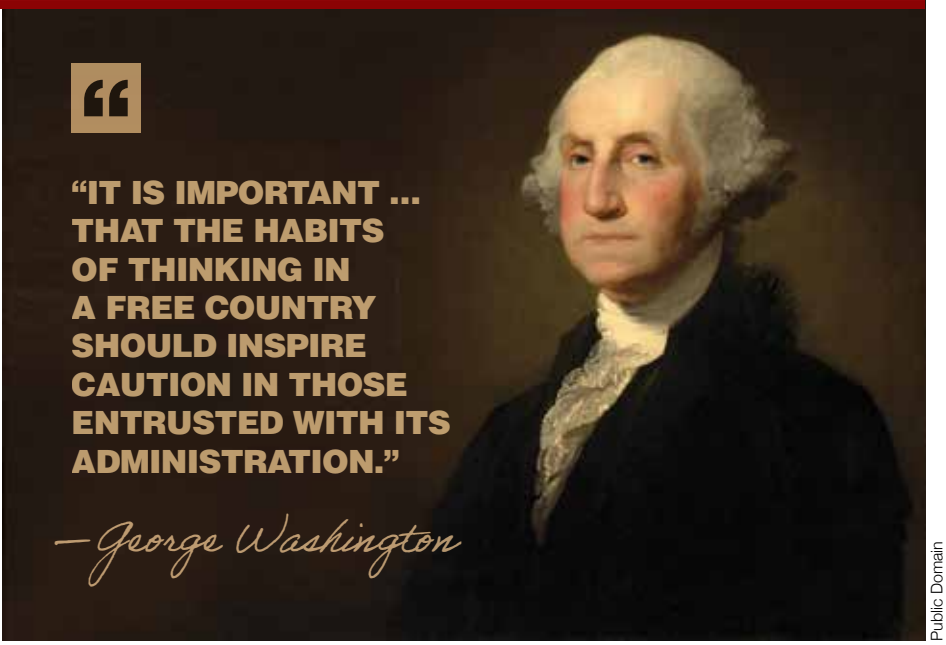
The Globalist Agenda Laid Bare

What is the real goal of the SAVE Act?

The SAVE Act is not about protecting elections; it's about protecting the power of the elite. It is the legislative arm of a globalist agenda that seeks to erase borders, redefine citizenship, and control populations through digital surveillance.

By redefining citizenship to include those never intended to be citizens, and by shackling American voters to REAL ID documentation, the SAVE Act serves one master: consolidation. Consolidation of identity, consolidation of power, consolidation of the electorate into a single, federalized, trackable, and manipulable bloc.

In his Farewell Address, George Washington said, "It is important … that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration." One wonders what Washington would say of the cowards and collaborators now populating Congress — men and women who swear an oath to the Constitution with one hand while signing its destruction with the other.


"IT IS IMPORTANT … THAT THE HABITS OF THINKING IN A FREE COUNTRY SHOULD INSPIRE CAUTION IN THOSE ENTRUSTED WITH ITS ADMINISTRATION."
—George Washington

Public Domain

This moment is not theoretical. It is not an exercise in civic awareness. It is a constitutional crossroads.

If the Senate passes the SAVE Act, it will codify a dangerous new precedent: that Congress may regulate who is and is not a citizen, who may and may not vote, and which documents are and are not acceptable proof of your right to participate in the Republic.

That is not the behavior of a limited government. That is the behavior of an oligarchy cloaked in republican garb.

John Adams wrote in 1776, "A Constitution of Government once changed from Freedom, can never be restored. Liberty, once lost, is lost forever." We are on the cusp of losing not just liberty, but what it means to be a citizen of this Republic.

What Must Be Done

First, the Senate must kill this bill, and bury it so deep that no future Congress dares dig it up. Next, Americans must wake up to the true danger of digital identification regimes such as REAL ID, and oppose their integration into every facet of life — from voting to travel to employment.

We must also return to the original meaning of the 14th Amendment, rejecting the fiction of "birthright citizenship" for those outside the jurisdiction of the United States. Citizenship is a covenant, not a coincidence of geography.

Congress must not only kill the SAVE Act, but enact legislation that rolls back existing federal election laws, including the Motor Voter Act. In the January 15, 2001 issue of *The New American*, Robert W. Lee summarized the dangers of federalized election rules:

> Motor voter also illustrates one danger of federal control of our state and local voting systems. Under the decentralized electoral system created under the Constitution, corruption and ineptitude might infect some jurisdictions without compromising the entire nation. However, when the central government inflicts a calamitous experiment upon the entire nation — as was the case with motor voter — the problems that result are spread nationwide. Useful reform of our elections must begin with repeal of the motor voter law.

Legislation to fully repeal Motor Voter — H.R. 55, sponsored by Representative Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.) — has been introduced in the current (119th) Congress. Rather than seek to amend Motor Voter, Congress should repeal it entirely by enacting H.R. 55.

Finally, we must demand that every candidate for public office — at every level — take a clear stand on the SAVE Act, REAL ID, and the 14th Amendment. No more evasion. No more deception. As Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1816, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." ■

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EXPLOSIVE CLAIMS OF 9/11 "COVERUP"

AP Images

More than two decades after the tragedy of 9/11, a whistleblower is challenging the "official" narrative of the event, and his story is getting a lot of attention.

by Paul Dragu

In mid-April, former U.S. Representative Wayne Curtis "Curt" Weldon (R-Pa.) appeared on multiple alternative media outlets with claims that U.S. intelligence knew a year in advance about terrorist plans to commit what would become the 9/11 attacks, that the CIA knew Osama bin Laden wasn't in Afghanistan when American troops were sent there to get him, and that the official reasons for the collapse of the three World Trade Center (WTC) buildings are false. Weldon said the Deep State torpedoed his political career when it became clear that he was going to reveal what he knew to the public.

Weldon represented the 7th District of Pennsylvania from 1987 to 2007. He served as the vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Homeland Security Committee, and was on his way to becoming the chair of the Armed Services Committee until, as he sees it, he was bounced out by a political newcomer due to his growing suspicion of the official 9/11 narrative.

One of the shows Weldon appeared on was Tucker Carlson's, and the episode in question, published April 14, garnered more than five million views on X in just three days. Weldon spoke passionately and in great detail regarding behavior by the U.S. government that, if true, would make 9/11 the deadliest coverup on U.S. soil.

Weldon's disturbing allegations have gotten the attention of Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), who sits on the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. During an appearance on right-wing commentator Benny Johnson's show on April 21, Senator Johnson said it was time to get to the bottom of "what actually happened on 9/11." Senator Johnson, who had recently spoken to Weldon, mentioned the possibility of future congressional hearings into the attacks.

Military Intel Had Prior Knowledge of 9/11?

A special military intelligence operation code-named "Able Danger" knew of terrorists' plans to bring down the World Trade Center buildings one year before 9/11 happened, according to Weldon.

After the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, Weldon sponsored legislation that led to the creation of the Gilmore Commission. Named after its chair, Virginia Governor James Gilmore, the commission recommended the creation of an intelligence fusion center. Weldon said he met with the deputy secretary of defense, deputy director of the FBI, and deputy director of the CIA on November 4, 1999 to discuss putting together this fusion center. Everyone but the CIA was on board with the idea, he said. The CIA representative told Weldon that the agency was doing something else on its own, a program called CI-21.

After 9/11, Weldon said, he received "frantic calls" from four people on the Able Danger team, which was operating

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out of Fort Belvoir in Virginia. He talked to these people separately, yet each one told the same story. They said, "We identified every cell of al-Qaeda in the world a year before 9/11. We identified the New York cell a year before 9/11. We knew there was going to be a problem."

Weldon said he has the charts and documents he received at the time showing the 9/11 plans. The Able Danger team tried to tell the FBI and DOJ three times about these plans. "All three times they were stopped," Weldon said. "They were not allowed to transfer the information."

Able Danger's information could have prevented 9/11, according not only to Weldon but to former FBI director Louis Freeh, who wrote an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* titled, "An Incomplete Investigation: Why did the 9/11 Commission ignore 'Able Danger'?" Freeh wrote:

> "Able Danger" cast light on a missed opportunity that could have potentially prevented 9/11. Specifically, Able Danger concluded in February 2000 that military experts had identified Mohamed Atta by name (and maybe by photograph) as an al Qaeda agent operating in the U.S. Subsequently, military officers assigned to Able Danger were prevented from sharing this critical information with FBI agents, even though appointments had been made to do so. Why?… The Able Danger intelligence, if confirmed, is undoubtedly the most relevant fact of the entire post-9/11 inquiry. Even the most junior investigator would immediately know that the name and photo ID of Atta in 2000 is precisely the kind of tactical intelligence the FBI has many times employed to prevent attacks and arrest terrorists. Yet the 9/11 Commission inexplicably concluded that it "was not historically significant."

As far as the 9/11 Commission report goes, Weldon repeatedly referred to it as "garbage." The 9/11 Commission, set up in 2002 to investigate all aspects of the 9/11 attacks, was a coverup — "1,000 percent coverup" — he told Carlson. The leader of the coverup, he added, was the commission's director, Philip Zelikow.

Curt Weldon

AP Images

Zelikow worked on the National Security Council in the George H.W. Bush administration. He was in the center of Gulf War "diplomatic activity" with Secretary of State James Baker and National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft during the '90s. He also served on the George W. Bush transition team, as well as the administration's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. In 1998, he co-authored an article published in the Council on Foreign Relations mouthpiece *Foreign Affairs* titled "Catastrophic Terrorism: Tackling the New Danger," in which he had the foresight to predict that America wasn't ready for "the new threat of catastrophic terrorism." He said the government could level attacks on Americans' civil liberties should an attack on the World Trade Center much worse than the one in 1993 happen:

> If the device that exploded in 1993 under the World Trade Center had been nuclear, or had effectively dispersed a deadly pathogen, the resulting horror and chaos would have exceeded our ability to describe it. Such an act of catastrophic terrorism would be a watershed event in American history. It could involve loss of life and property unprecedented in peacetime and undermine America's fundamental sense of security, as did the Soviet atomic bomb test in 1949. Like Pearl Harbor, this event would divide our past and future into a before and after. The United States might respond with draconian measures, scaling back civil liberties, allowing wider surveillance of citizens, detention of suspects, and use of deadly force.

Interestingly, researcher James Perloff has referred to Pearl Harbor as "Roosevelt's 9/11." Just as the U.S. government ignored several warnings and intel of the impending attack on Pearl Harbor to use it as a pretext for entry into World War II, many believe the government allowed 9/11 to happen in order to justify intervention in the Middle East and a clampdown on civil rights. The Patriot Act is the signature liberty-crushing legislation that 9/11 birthed. It gives the government free rein to spy on American citizens in the name of national security.

Weldon said Inspector General for the Pentagon John Crane filed a whistleblower paper with unknown information about the 9/11 tragedy. He offered Carlson a copy of it. Moreover, Crane asked for protection because his bosses in the Defense Intelligence Agency refused to allow him to become a whistleblower. Weldon also said that Crane told him he was advised to lie to and misinform Congress about 9/11, triggering another touchy topic for the former congressman. The "scumbags" in intel, a fiery Weldon said, employ deception regularly. They play games by manipulating the media to put out a narrative. In essence, intelligence agencies —he specifically referred to the CIA — manipulate policy and the narratives regarding it. He said:

The agency plays games with Congress. The Congress thinks it's getting good information — and it's not. The agency wants members fighting over stupid things so they can do what they want.… There are some scumbags. I know those scumbags. At the appropriate time, I'll name those scumbags who have made millions and millions of dollars, and are making millions and millions of dollars today. They're making it in Ukraine and around the world because of contacts they established.

WTC Buildings Brought Down by Controlled Demolition?

Weldon is a firefighter and former fire chief. He also trained the fire protection and arson agents at the Insurance Company of North America and walked the World Trade Center North Tower after the 1993 bombing. He believes the World Trade Center buildings collapsed on 9/11 due to controlled demolition, not damage from intense fires.

The official story, based on the conclusions of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), is that the three WTC buildings fell after incurring significant structural damage as a result of widespread fires. Also, in Towers 1 and 2, jet fuel from the airplanes created fireballs hot enough to compromise the steel frame. As for Building 7, which was not struck by an airplane, falling debris from Towers 1 and 2 punched a large hole and ignited fires in 10 of its 47 stories, which destroyed support columns.

But Weldon, echoing the sentiments of many, told Carlson, "That doesn't happen. You never have a 47-story building just collapse." He also doesn't believe the official reasons for the fall of Towers 1 and 2. "There's no way those two buildings could've collapsed into what they were there. Something had to happen."

Interestingly, Donald Trump said the same thing. Trump, considered at the time an expert on not only tall buildings, but tall buildings in New York City, said during a phone call with a local Channel 9 station on the morning of 9/11 that he didn't believe any of the WTC buildings came down for the reasons we've been told:

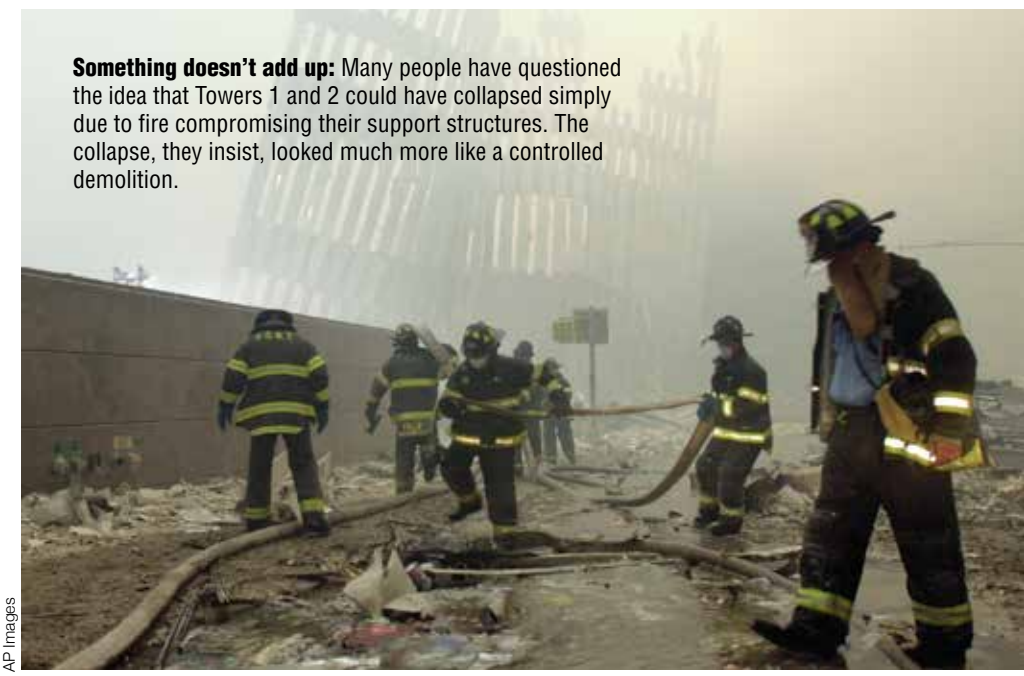
> The World Trade Center was always known as a very strong building. Don't forget, that took a big bomb in the basement [in 1993]. The basement is the most vulnerable place because that's your foundation. And I got to see that area about three or four days after it took place because one of my structural engineers actually took me for a tour, because he did the building. The building was standing solid and half of the columns were blown out.
>
> So, this was an unbelievably powerful building. If you know anything about structure, it was one of the first buildings built from the outside. The reason the World Trade Center had such narrow windows is that in between all the windows you had steel on the outside. And you had big, heavy I-beams.… I said, "How can a plane … even a 767 or 747," or whatever it might've been — "how can it possibly go through the steel?" I happen to think that they had not only a plane, but they had bombs that exploded almost simultaneously.

There is also a good deal of footage of firefighters saying they heard a "heavy duty explosion." One firefighter said he "definitely" heard a secondary explosion. Someone else who was at Ground Zero at the time said that an hour later, after the planes hit the towers, he heard "a big explosion from much, much lower." Another firefighter said, "It was like a bomb went off." Yet someone else added, "Federal agencies that were down there do believe that there was some sort of explosive device somewhere else besides the planes hitting."

On his April 15 episode, conservative commentator Benny Johnson included a clip with several similar testimonies of people at Ground Zero saying they heard explosions in the buildings.

The idea that the buildings would collapse was also foreign to the firefighters on the scene. In 2021, the National Geographic network (NatGeo) released a six-part docuseries titled *9/11: One Day in America*, a collage of raw stories told by firefighters, policemen, and other survivors. Captain Jay Jonas of the Fire Department of New York was in a stairwell on the fourth floor of the North Tower when it collapsed. He miraculously survived. He told NatGeo that it didn't occur to him that the building he was in could crumble until the South Tower did. He said, "I knew prior to this day a high-rise building had never collapsed after a fire, and now, this sister building [South Tower] to the one I was in that got hit after my building, was down."

Many skyscrapers around the world have survived fires that had been raging for



Something doesn't add up: Many people have questioned the idea that Towers 1 and 2 could have collapsed simply due to fire compromising their support structures. The collapse, they insist, looked much more like a controlled demolition.

AP Images

hours, including the Joelma Building fire in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1974; the Las Vegas MGM Grand fire in 1980; the First Interstate Bank Building fire in Los Angeles in 1988; the Mandarin Oriental Hotel fire in Beijing, China, in 2009; the Parque Central Complex fire in Caracas, Venezuela, in 2004, which burned for 17 hours; and the One Meridian Plaza fire in Philadelphia in 1991, which burned for 19 hours!

The fact that these buildings survived severe fires and the World Trade Center structures didn't has served as fodder for the belief that controlled demolition ultimately brought them down. But, as many have pointed out, none of those buildings had 300,000-pound Boeing 767s slam into them at 440 and 590 miles per hour.

Building 7 might have generated more skepticism and "conspiracy theories" than the other two for the simple reason that it fell despite not being hit by an airplane. Coincidentally, the building also housed a secret CIA office, providing more fertile ground for speculation. Even Senator Johnson singled out this building during his conversation with Benny Johnson. "Start with Building 7," he said, "I don't know if you can find structural engineers other than the ones that had the corrupt investigation inside NIST that would say that thing didn't come down in any other way than a controlled demolition."

Building 7 happened to be built over an electrical substation and a power plant, and there was a large amount of diesel oil stored underneath it. This has, understandably, prompted some to speculate those elements played a role in the building's collapse. But in 2008, NIST released a report exclusively dedicated to the collapse of that building. NIST lead investigator Shyam Sunder told journalists, "WTC 7 collapsed because of fires fueled by office furnishings. It did not collapse from explosives or from diesel fuel fires." But even NIST acknowledged the collapse was unprecedented, with Sunder saying, "This is the first time that we are aware of, that a building taller than about 15 stories has collapsed primarily due to fires."

In 2015, forensic engineer and University of Alaska Professor Leroy Hulsey and a crew of Ph.D. students undertook a four-year, $300,000 study to determine how Building 7 fell. They reconstructed it according to the original plans using computer modeling. In 2020, Hulsey released the conclusions of the study, titled "A Structural Reevaluation of the Collapse of World Trade Center 7." He said NIST's conclusion that fires brought down the building was wrong and impossible. "Did building 7 collapse from fires? And the answer is no.… The girder bearings at column 79 moved less than two inches. It would not have been a problem," Hulsey said. He concluded the only way that building could have collapsed the way it did was for all the support beams to fail at the same time, hinting at a controlled demolition. According to the study:

> Fires could not have caused weakening or displacement of structural members capable of initiating any of the hypothetical local failures alleged to have triggered the total collapse of the building, nor could any local failures, even if they had occurred, have triggered a sequence of failures that would have resulted in the observed total collapse.… The secondary conclusion of our study is that the collapse of WTC 7 was a global failure involving the near-simultaneous failure of every column in the building. This conclusion is based primarily upon the finding that the simultaneous failure of all core columns over 8 stories followed 1.3 seconds later by the simultaneous failure of all exterior columns over 8 stories produces almost exactly the behavior observed in videos of the collapse, whereas no other sequence of failures that we simulated produced the observed behavior. We cannot completely rule out the possibility that an alternative scenario may have caused the observed collapse; however, the near-simultaneous failure of every column is the only scenario we identified that was capable of producing the observed behavior.

AP Images

Make it make sense: Many large buildings suffer severe fires and remain standing. Building 7 came down in what seemed to many people to be a controlled demolition.

Did the CIA Know bin Laden Wasn't in Afghanistan?

Weldon said he received 10 solid tips from highly qualified sources telling him that, while U.S. soldiers were dying in Afghanistan trying to overthrow the Taliban, destroy al-Qaeda, and capture Osama bin Laden, bin Laden was hiding in Iran. He said he met with the CIA and asked them if this was true. The

Wild-goose chase: Whistleblower Curt Weldon says U.S. intelligence agencies knew Osama bin Laden initially was not in Afghanistan, but in Iran.

AP Images

response was, "We heard similar reports. We can neither confirm or deny them."

Three months later, Weldon received more intel, this time that bin Laden was being treated outside of Tehran, Iran. Again, during a classified briefing, he asked if this was true. The answer was the same: "We've heard similar reports. We can neither confirm or deny that bin Laden is being treated at a military hospital outside of Tehran."

After that, Weldon said he met a man who was a non-official cover (NOC) for the CIA. The NOC, who had worked in Iran, said he received reports from his friends of bin Laden sightings. The NOC asked Weldon to help him get into Iran so he could get bin Laden "dead or alive."

Weldon said he also met with a falconer from Maine, a Sikh U.S. citizen who trained children of Middle Eastern royal families in falconry. He asked Weldon for help getting into Iran. The man said fellow falconers in the region were relaying reports of sightings of bin Laden's falcons in Iran. He offered to go there and tag bin Laden's birds, which would lead the United States straight to him.

Weldon believes the intel agencies were hiding the truth about bin Laden's whereabouts. Moreover, he added, bin Laden "was placed" in Iran, based on intel relayed to him by someone who said he was in the room "when the deal was cut." The "deal" was cut not with the Iranian government, Weldon said, but with Qasem Soleimani, the commander in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps who was killed in a 2020 airstrike authorized by President Donald Trump. Weldon believes this deal is "why we killed him."

But why hide where bin Laden really was?

According to Weldon, "The point was to manipulate to get our troops committed to fight the battles in Afghanistan, Iraq, and that whole region of the world. And they had to have the justification to do that."

The fiery former congressman then said the skullduggery that sent the U.S. military on a wild-goose chase persists to this day:

> Our intelligence agency has tentacles around the world. And they're not answering to anybody. And that's the problem right now. That's the problem Trump has. Yeah, he can cut off [people's security clearance], but that network extends far and wide around the world and they can play all the games they want — in Ukraine, in other countries! And until we go after that, this is not going to stop.

What's Next?

One of the scenes in NatGeo's *9/11: One Day in America* shows firefighters planning rescue missions in the lobby of the North Tower before it collapsed. But every few seconds they're interrupted by a loud crash on the roof above them. They pause, do their best to control their horror, and get back to work as human beings continue falling to their deaths above them.

In another scene, a man describes walking around at the base of one of the towers, tagging dead people who had jumped out of the building or fallen out of the airplane. As he was about to put a DECEASED tag on a woman, she came to and told him she was not dead. He lied and told her that she was OK. While she was not dead, he knew she would be. The lower part of her body was severely mangled.

There are also stories of heroic rescues, emotional stories of humans at their best. Two men became blood brothers after one rescued the other, who was near one of the floors where the plane impacted. Survivors told a story of being trapped behind a stairwell door that wouldn't open until four firefighters broke it open. The firefighters saved the people's lives and continued up the stairs. Those firefighters saved 70 people before perishing.

While the official narrative about 9/11 might be a lie, what happened to thousands of Americans on that day is not. The horror, the devastation, the carnage of that day is real, undeniable — and tragic. The American people deserve answers. Did the government know the attacks were coming? Is there any evidence of controlled demolition? And did the country's most advanced intelligence agency know bin Laden wasn't in Afghanistan when American soldiers were there dying?

Weldon believes the president needs to create a legitimate, independent 9/11 commission of fire experts, builders, and engineers to examine the intelligence and expose the truth. He says he has a pile of documentation — including testimonies and expert interviews. "Everybody is ready to go," he said. "All Trump has to do is name a new presidential commission, let them do the investigation. We'll give them all the material, and then we'll show the country." ■

God FAMILY COUNTRY

JenkoAtaman/Adobe Stock

HIGH TARIFFS ARE PRO-FAMILY

by Rebecca Terrell

We can thank their thorough understanding of economics and its ripple effects on society for the fact that our nation's Founding Fathers instituted tariffs as the cornerstone of federal revenue. Their goal was to build a robust nation on a strong foundation of stable families. They knew that so-called free trade is really just an economic version of open borders, ushering in societal suicide.

History is replete with proofs that high tariffs, by strengthening the national economy and protecting jobs, ultimately foster strong families. One could imagine that was the point of political strategist James Carville's pithy 1992 political campaign slogan, "It's the economy, stupid!"

He wasn't the first to arrive at that conclusion, though others expressed their thoughts more tactfully. Nineteenth-century economist Friedrich List, an advocate of economic nationalism, argued that tariffs help nurture a country's home-grown industry, freeing it from dependence on imports and protecting it from (often unreliable) foreign competitors.

The ultimate goal, however, is healthy families. In his 1841 book *The National System of Political Economy*, he wrote, "The protection of infant industries is the surest way to secure the welfare of the working classes." Tariffs, he taught, ensure manufacturing jobs, which historically offered more reliable wages for family breadwinners.

List had a huge influence on modern-day South Korean economist Ha-Joon Chang, as evidenced by his 2002 book *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*. In it Chang noted the time-worn pattern of developed nations using tariffs to industrialize, and then "kicking away the ladder" by promoting free-market policies that hinder other nations' growth.

The hypocrisy was evident during the American Civil War, when Great Britain complained that the Americans weren't being sufficiently mindful of "free trade." A fact skillfully concealed was that, under *its* largest period of growth — 1720 to 1850 — Great Britain subscribed to protectionist policies. Its tariff rates on manufacturing imports in 1820, for instance, were 45 to 55 percent. To put this in context, tariffs in the Netherlands were six to eight percent, in Germany eight to 12 percent, and in France 20 percent.

Later, the United States would succumb to the fallacy of "free trade." The bitter irony is that we lost what we had gained. Tariffs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries often exceeded 40 percent, helping to create a manufacturing base that enabled single-income households to flourish. Industrialization exploded after the McKinley Tariff Act of 1890, catapulting the United States above all other countries as the world's leading industrial power, as detailed in economist Douglas Irwin's 2017 book

Rebecca Terrell is a senior editor of The New American.

Clashing Over Commerce. The situation enabled countless men to support their growing families, while their wives stayed home to rock the cradle and thus, rule the world.

Witness the decline in tariffs and uptick in trade liberalization that took place between the 1950s and 1980s, and the not-so-curious correlation with devastating effects on the family. Prior to the economic upheaval, single-income, nuclear families held together by strong moral bonds were the norm. By the 1980s, the deterioration was entrenched: Divorce rates had skyrocketed, as had single-parent households; marriage rates dropped precipitously as cohabitation became an accepted reality; and the labor force became saturated with women competing for the same jobs as their fathers, husbands, and sons, driving down wages and making double-income households a *necessity* rather than a luxury. Church attendance nosedived. Homeownership rates stalled and have yet to recover. America switched from a manufacturing to a service economy as jobs were offshored and the country's reliance on imports increased. Most damaging of all, latchkey children were left to be reared by godless state schools and a corrupt entertainment industry.

"In roughly a generation, the economic fundamentalism articulated by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and U.S. Treasury has set the world on a path to deindustrialization that has created a transnational underclass," writes Jon Jeter in *Flat Broke in the Free Market: How Globalization Fleeced Working People*. He calls it a "biblical cataclysm," and says it can be measured by trends such as divorce, crime, and prostitution rates.

No one can say we weren't warned. Adam Smith, widely considered the Father of Economics, wrote in his seminal work *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* that money is not a true measure of wealth, but only a means of exchange. The metric that determines a country's actual worth, he said, is the number of children families can afford to support.

Even the revolutionary John Maynard Keynes, a staunch advocate of government intervention in economics, recognized the importance of protecting the home front. In his 1933 essay "National Self-Sufficiency," he wrote, "We do not wish, therefore, to be at the mercy of world forces.… We wish ... to be our own masters, and to be as free as we can make ourselves from the interferences of the outside world." The reason for this thinking was not purely economical, as a healthy economy is merely a means to an end, not the end itself.

Researchers have long recognized the societal benefits of keeping industry close to home. Local production ensures that people aren't compelled to relocate for jobs, nor are they reliant on foreign goods. They have more time to spend with family, and naturally spend less time worrying about the future. Life is more predictable. In his 2011 book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, anthropologist David Graeber highlights the resulting tight-knit, supportive communities that tend to form in such circumstances, and that family unity is a hallmark of them.

Contrarywise, a 2019 study by economist Dani Rodrik found that free-trade policies disrupt this social cohesion. Workers job-hop, move, and retrain at much higher rates, causing extreme disruptions in family life. The title of a 2016 book sums up the result: *Strangers in Their Own Land*. Written by sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild, it depicts the social impacts of America's industrial demise — broken families, latchkey kids, decline in morals, etc. Global competition and offshoring are two of the main culprits she identifies, while offering tariffs as a solution to help raise families out of a mere survival-based existence.

Yet critics cry foul. During President Donald Trump's first term in office, economist Paul Krugman blasted his tariffs in a *New York Times* column, complaining that they had raised costs to the point of an added annual burden of $1,000 per household. Current mainstream media are howling the same protestations. Obviously, none have read Adam Smith, who addressed these objections in 1776: "The recovery of a great foreign market will generally more than compensate for the transitory inconvenience of paying more for some kinds of goods over a short period." In other words, high prices are short-lived and corrected over time as corporations onshore their manufacturing base. We're already witnessing this phenomenon in the case of some tech, pharmaceutical, and auto manufacturers.

With rich natural resources and a strong workforce at our disposal, and tariffs protecting both, the only thing standing in the way of America's self-sufficiency now is an unconstitutional federal bureaucracy. It's time to dismantle the fourth branch of government and make American families prosperous again. ■

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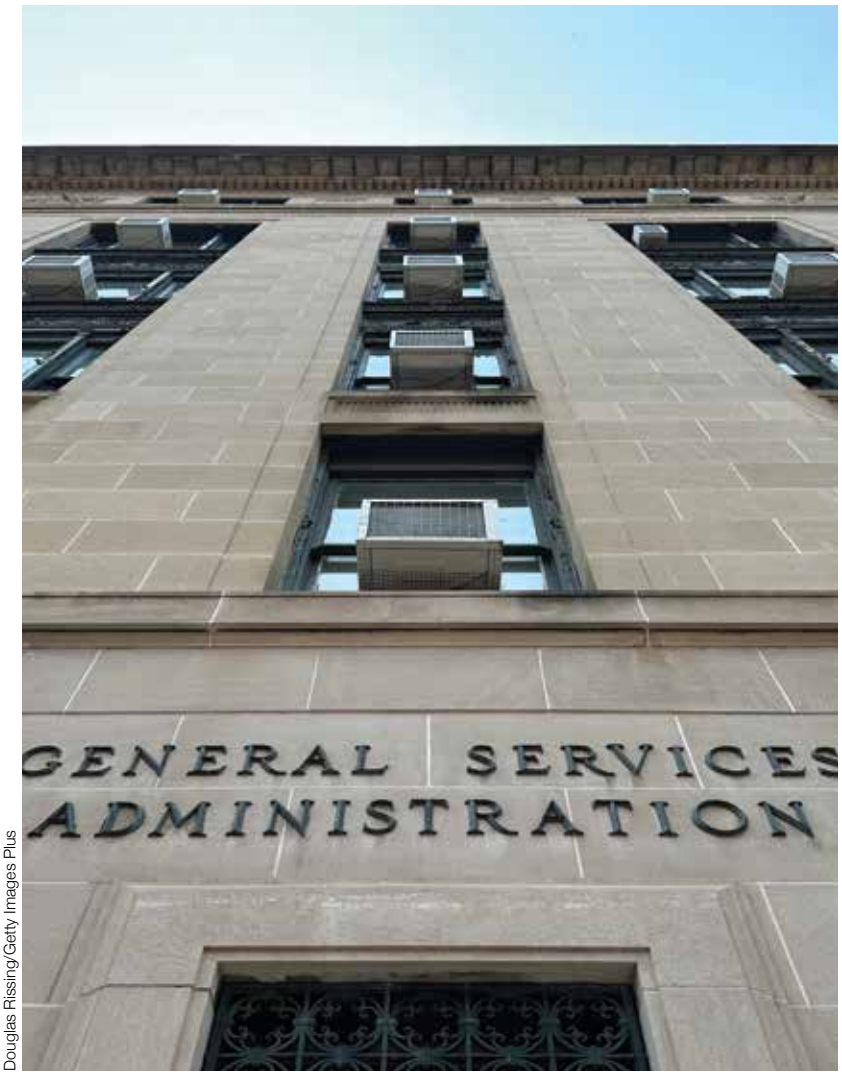
THE PENDLETON ACT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Executive-branch agencies used to be staffed by people of an incoming president's choosing. The Pendleton Act changed all that, and helped give us the Permanent State.



Douglas Rissing/Getty Images Plus

Big Government: The General Services Administration is just one example of the plethora of executive branch agencies that are essentially unaccountable to the president because of the Civil Service System.

by Steve Byas

President Donald Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), headed up by tech billionaire Elon Musk, has generated a great deal of controversy in the United States. While DOGE's mandate is to get control of the federal bureaucracy and reduce wasteful federal spending — which should not be controversial — many opponents are claiming that the president, and by extension the executive branch, does not have the authority to rein in the federal bureaucracy. This raises an important question: If the U.S. Constitution gives all federal executive power to the president, then how is the president limited in exercising that power over the executive-branch agencies and departments?

Much of this current controversy is a consequence of a law passed in the latter part of the 19th century — the Pendleton Act — which set up the U.S. Civil Service System. Since that time, Congress has chipped away at presidential control over the executive branch. Now, executive agencies are populated by federal bureaucrats who not only have usurped executive power, but also issue federal "regulations" or "rules" that are treated as laws.

When the current Constitution went into effect in 1789, the federal government was quite small. For the next several decades, Americans had little contact with the federal government except for the Post Office and the federal census every 10 years.

When Andrew Jackson was elected president in 1828, federal jobs were filled by employees often loyal to the previous administration of John Quincy Adams and what was then called the National Republican party. In fact, Jackson's election was a reaction to the Republican Party founded by Thomas Jefferson drifting away from its original principles of limited government and adherence to the Constitution.

Jackson, not surprisingly, fired a number of federal employees, arguing that the American people had voted for a different direction and needed a new government, so to speak. Referring to the aphorism "to the victor go the spoils," Jackson's opponents

Steve Byas is a university history and government instructor and author of History's Greatest Libels.

dubbed his action the introduction of the "spoils system." While many today are taught that Jackson fired virtually every employee on the federal payroll, this is far from accurate. Of 10,093 government appointees, only around 10 percent were dismissed.

Of those 10 percent, nearly 100 had prison records. The registrar of the Treasury had stolen about $10,000 (an enormous sum in those days) during several years of employment, but begged Jackson to let him keep his job. Jackson responded, "Sir, I would turn out my own father under the same circumstances."

In his first annual address to Congress, Jackson explained the dismissals: "Corruption in some and in others perversion of correct feelings and principles divert government from its legitimate ends and make it an engine for the support of the few at the expense of the many." He added, "Offices were not established to give support to particular men at the public expense.… He who is removed has the same means of obtaining a living that are enjoyed by the millions who never held office." He admitted that there might be "individual distress" involved in "rotation" in office, but contended that it was a "leading principle in the republican creed."

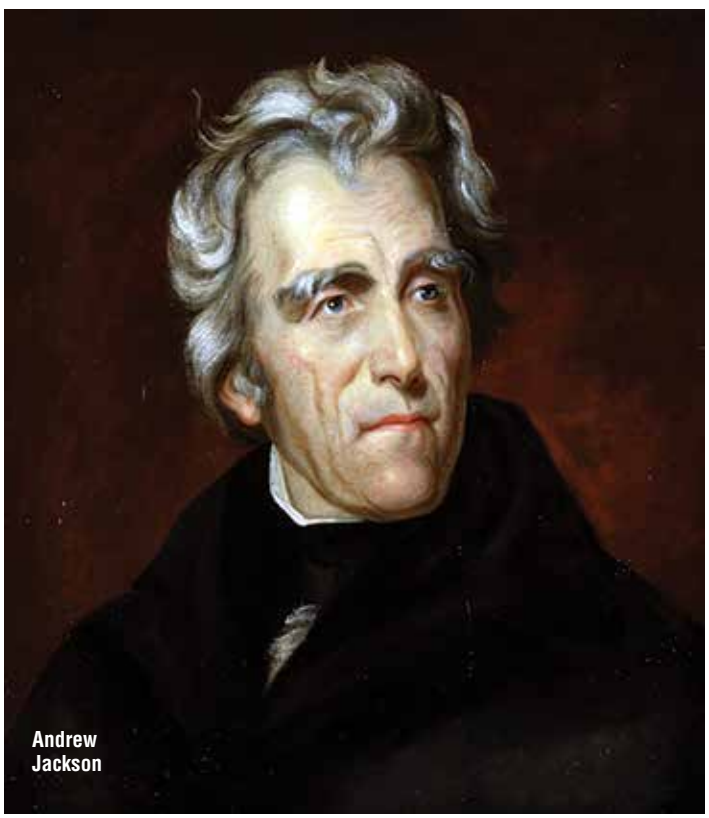
In defense of Jackson, the late history professor Clarence Carson wrote in *The Sections and the Civil War*, "Are all government appointments to be for life (except for impeachment)? If not, when may they be terminated, and by whom? If they are appointments for life, how would a President execute his policies? Would an incoming President not be stripped of most of his powers of appointment and control over his administration?"

On the other hand, most modern history textbooks have presented the system implemented by President Jackson as a bad thing. For example, the high school textbook *The Americans* declares, "As might be expected, some government employees [appointed by Jackson] were not qualified for the positions they filled. Moreover, political appointees, whether qualified or not, sometimes used their positions for personal gain." And the college textbook *American Pageant* says that the assassination of President James Garfield "had one positive outcome: it shocked politicians into reforming the shameful spoils system." More on that later.

Chester Arthur and the Political Machine

In the 1880s, the country opted to reverse course from Jackson's so-called spoils system, and implement a "civil service system" in which a person could hold onto an office within the federal government regardless of which party or person won a presidential election. The Pendleton Act, which created the U.S. Civil Service System, was signed into law by a president who had benefited from the alleged evils of the spoils system established by Jackson.

Chester Alan Arthur did not seem a likely champion of a civil service system. A product of the political machine of Senator Roscoe Conkling of New York, in 1871 Arthur was appointed collector of the New



To the victor: Incoming President Andrew Jackson staffed his executive agencies with loyalists, which led to what many referred to as the "spoils system."

AP Images

Party man: Chester A. Arthur benefited greatly from the political machine of the Republican Party. When president, though, he seemed to change his tune and push for reform.

York Custom House, which at that time was the most lucrative of the ports of entry through which foreign goods entered the country and where tariffs were levied.

As collector, Arthur made $12,000 per year (when the average worker was fortunate to make $500 annually), despite his habit of coming to work late and leaving early. Arthur padded that already-generous income via the "moiety" process, in which officials who caught illegal, unregistered, or undertaxed shipments received a percentage of the goods seized or fines levied. This enabled him to make more than $50,000 per year. Congress outlawed moiety in 1874.

The reform-minded Rutherford B. Hayes was elected president in 1876, and was determined to attack corruption. He wrote in his diary in the spring of 1877, "Now for civil service reform. Legislation must be prepared. We must limit and narrow the area of patronage. We must diminish the evils of office-seeking."

AP Images

Reformer: President Garfield wanted to reform the "spoils system," among other things. His assassination led to Arthur's presidency, who then supported some of those reforms.

Hayes selected John Jay (the grandson of the first Supreme Court chief justice) to look into the reports of corruption in the New York Custom House. The Jay Report was very critical of Arthur. Though it had little to say about Arthur *personally*, his failure to stop the rampant corruption under his nose was brought to light. Jay noted that many employees never came to work, and others spent most of their time reading newspapers.

Hayes was livid, and directed Treasury Secretary John Sherman (brother of Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman) to fire Arthur. Arthur's protector, Senator Conkling, protested, arguing that the Tenure of Office Act (the law used by the Radical Republicans to impeach President Andrew Johnson during Reconstruction) did not allow Hayes to remove officers in the executive branch without the approval of the Senate. When Hayes nominated Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. (the father of the future president) to replace Arthur, the Senate refused to confirm him. Hayes then suspended Arthur during the summer recess of 1878, which made Arthur a darling of the Stalwart Republicans in league with Conkling. ("Stalwarts" was the name for Republicans who openly used the spoils system to benefit the Republican Party.) Finally, the Senate confirmed a new Custom House collector in February 1879.

Not to be outdone, Conkling used his influence to get Arthur named the chairman of the New York Republican Party. When President Hayes did not seek a second term in 1880, the Republican National Convention deadlocked in choosing between former President Ulysses S. Grant and Representative James G. Blaine (R-Maine). The delegates selected a compromise candidate, Senator-elect James Garfield of Ohio, on the 36th ballot.

As Garfield was part of the reform-minded wing of the Republican Party known as the "Half-Breeds," it was decided that the ticket needed a vice-presidential candidate to placate the Stalwarts. After all, New York bankers J.P. Morgan and Jay Gould were major financial backers of the Stalwarts, and their money was critical for a successful campaign. In a shocking move, the convention settled on Chester Arthur!

After taking office in 1881, President Garfield proceeded to name as new collector of the New York Custom House William Robertson, a New York congressman who had supported Blaine over Conkling's favorite, Grant, at the 1880 convention. This infuriated Conkling. When the Senate balked at the nomination, Garfield insisted on Robertson's confirmation, arguing that the issue was "whether the President is a registering clerk of the Senate or the Executive of the United States."

After a delay, the Senate finally confirmed Robertson, causing Conkling to resign. Conkling expected the New York Legislature to quickly reelect him, thus humiliating the president. Instead, the New York Legislature had had enough of Conkling, and refused to send him back to the Senate. Arthur, loyal to Conkling, had publicly disagreed with his own president in the dispute.

The Assassination of President Garfield

How President Garfield and Vice President Arthur would have worked together is uncertain, because Garfield was shot in the back on July 2, 1881 while waiting on a train at the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station in Washington, D.C. Garfield was not killed immediately, but the wound was mortal, and he died in September.

The man who shot him, Charles Guiteau, made no effort to escape, but instead stood over the wounded president with the smoking gun and proclaimed, "I did it and will go to jail for it. I am a Stalwart and Arthur will be president." While Guiteau is generally referred to in historical accounts as a "disappointed office seeker" — thus offering powerful suppport for an end to the spoils system and its replacement by a civil service system — there is no evidence that he had ever asked Gar-

field for a job. However, when he was captured at the railway station, Guiteau had a letter in his possession addressed to Arthur (who was now president), offering some suggestions for Cabinet appointments.

Many wondered whether Arthur was somehow implicated in Garfield's assassination, and this led Arthur to become a champion of civil service reform, perhaps to demonstrate his innocence and improve his public image. In his first address to Congress in December 1881, Arthur called for the creation of a system similar to that used by the British, in which government employees had job tenure and pensions. He urged a system in which workers would be hired according to merit, rather than politics, determined by passing an examination.

This offers us a powerful lesson. While it is understandable for Congress to enact laws in response to specific events, they should exercise caution in doing so while swept up in the emotion of the moment. Senator George Pendleton, an Ohio Democrat who had been George McClellan's running mate in the presidential election of 1864, had introduced a bill to create a civil service system with appropriate examinations.

AP Images

Father of the Civil Service System: George Pendleton introduced the bill that would later lead to the U.S. Civil Service System and the permanent bureaucratic state.

When the Democrats won control of the House of Representatives in the elections of 1882, and the Republicans were left clinging to a two-seat majority in the Senate, the Pendleton bill was dusted off and used to create the U.S. Civil Service System. The Republicans were probably motivated more by fear of further defeat at the polls than by principles, but the Democrats generally opposed the idea. After all, they were tasting victory in 1884 in the presidential election, and they wanted to use the spoils system, not end it.

In the lame-duck session following their defeat, the Republicans decided to become the champions of reform and pushed through the Pendleton Act before the Democrats took control of the House. The bill created a civil service commission and a board to set examination standards. It also outlawed the system of assessments for federal employees, under which government workers were expected to give back a certain portion of their salaries to the political party that had hired them for their jobs.

The bill passed 38-5 in the Senate, with an astounding 33 abstentions, and by a count of 155-47 in the House, with 87 abstentions.

The Rise of the Bureaucratic State

Since the creation of the Civil Service System, the federal bureaucracy has grown considerably, and its responsiveness to election results has diminished. As *American Pageant* put it, "With the plum federal posts now beyond their reach, politicians were forced to look elsewhere for money, the mother's milk of politics. Increasingly, they turned to the bulging coffers of the big corporations."

Views as to the virtue of this expanded bureaucracy differ. Sociologist Max Weber offered the view that bureaucracy rules the world, whether socialist or capitalist. Ludwig von Mises, the Austrian economist, denounced bureaucracy as "always applied with an opprobrious connotation," and claimed that it "paralyzes the individual's initiative." John Stuart Mill conceded that, while bureaucracy offers certain advantages such as experienced civil workers, it is a form of government inferior to and incompatible with representative government. He added that bureaucracy stifles the mind and "tends to become a pedantocracy."

On the other hand, Democratic President Woodrow Wilson extolled the virtues of bureaucracy in implementing the progressive political philosophy, because "administrative questions are not political questions." President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his compliant Democratic Congress moved the country further away from representative government and toward bureaucratic government with the creation of "independent agencies," over which presidents have little control.

Insulated from popular support or opposition, bureaucrats in independent agencies and other departments of the federal government can, and often have, come to believe that they know what's best for society — more so than the elected occupants of the White House, more so than elected members of Congress, and certainly more so than the American taxpayer who pays their generous salaries. They are resistant to direction from a president with whom they disagree, despite the clear wording of the Constitution that gives the president all executive power.

While presidents are elected to implement certain policies — within the restrictions placed upon the office by the U.S. Constitution — they often have difficulty getting those policies enacted due to resistance from federal employees they cannot remove.

Even worse, because Congress has often failed to pass clear and specific laws, unelected bureaucrats are essentially making laws, calling them "rules" or "regulations."

While often depicted as the best way to ensure qualified individuals are hired for government jobs, the Civil Service System is frequently at odds with republican government. ■

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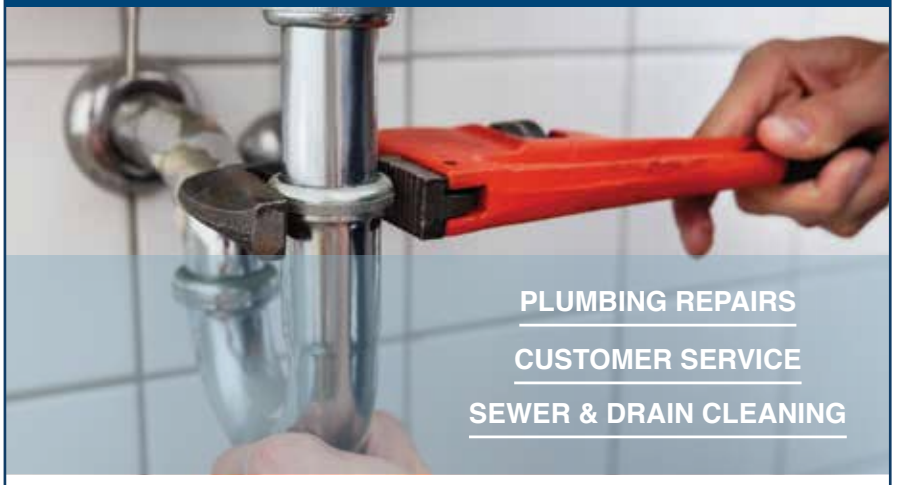

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The Disarmament Deception

by Joe Wolverton II, J.D.

When tyrants seek to rule unopposed, they follow a pattern as old as power itself: disarm the people, deceive them with fear, and consolidate all control into their own hands. This tactic is not new — it is not modern — it is ancient. And no example from antiquity makes this clearer than the cunning coup of Pisistratus, the so-called champion of the poor who became the tyrant of Athens. His method? Trick the people into surrendering their weapons in the name of safety. Sound familiar?

In the 6th century B.C., Athens teetered on the edge of civil war. The city was divided among three main political parties: the Men of the Plains led by the aristocratic Lycurgus; the Men of the Coast, under Megacles; and the Men of the Hills, led by Pisistratus, whose followers were mostly poor, discontented, and ripe for revolution. Pisistratus, a master manipulator, positioned himself as a man of the people — a humble friend of the working class, a protector of the common good. But behind his populist rhetoric beat the heart of an ambitious autocrat.

As the parties clashed, Pisistratus devised one of the most devious political deceptions in history. Together with his allies, he left Athens and staged an "attack." Stabbing himself, some supporters, and animals, he returned to the city bloodied and bruised, claiming to have narrowly escaped an assassination attempt by political enemies. He limped into the agora, his wounds on display, his story rehearsed — and the people bought it.

Athenians were swept away by anger and fear. Pisistratus warned of conspirators in their midst, enemies who would strike again. His "solution"? Disarm the people — not as punishment, but as precaution. A law was passed that forbade citizens from bearing arms unless authorized by the government. The people, tricked and trembling, consented. They delivered their weapons to the officials at the Acropolis for "safekeeping."

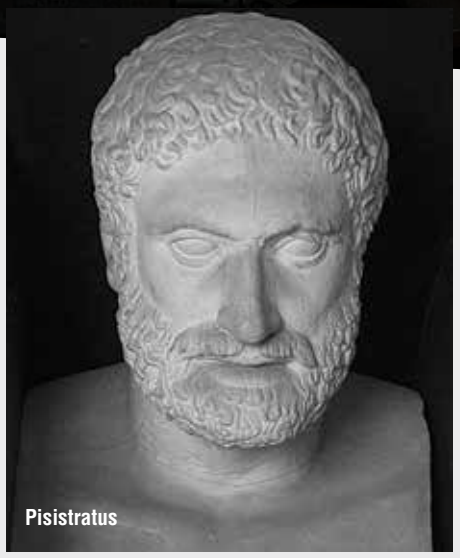
Let that sink in: They voluntarily surrendered their arms — their only defense against tyranny — to a man whose wounds were self-inflicted, whose lies were smooth, and whose hubris was limitless.

Solon, the great lawgiver and architect of Athenian liberty, saw through Pisistratus from the beginning. Though aged and no longer able to lead armies or dominate debates, he rose in protest. He warned his fellow citizens not to be charmed by rhetoric or paralyzed by fear. "True, you are singly each a crafty soul," he told them, "but all together make one empty fool." Solon understood that disarmament was not about public safety — it was about public servitude.

His warnings fell on deaf ears. Pisistratus, now surrounded by armed guards whom he controlled, stationed his men atop the Acropolis and fortified his position. The citizens, now disarmed and dependent, watched as the constitution was slowly strangled under the premise of protection. Pisistratus never formally abolished the constitution of Athens — he merely rendered it meaningless, converting himself into a tyrant in all but name, cloaked in the pretense of safety and order.

This story, lifted from the works of Herodotus and Plutarch, ought to haunt every liberty-loving American, because it is not just a story of ancient Athens — it is the story of every people who have traded arms for imagined security, only to wake up one day as subjects rather than citizens.

Today's would-be tyrants are more polished, but no less dangerous. They, too, cry out about threats to safety, about enemies at the gate, about the need for "common-sense gun laws" to protect the innocent.



Pisistratus

They exploit tragedies, fan the flames of fear, and offer disarmament as a balm. But the goal is the same now as it was in Athens: to separate the people from their weapons, and thereby from their power.

Modern Americans should remember Pisistratus when the politicians tell them, "We're just taking the dangerous weapons." They should recall Athens when they are told, "We just want to keep you safe." They should hear Solon's voice echoing through the centuries, warning that "it is easier to stop a rising tyranny than to destroy it once it has grown strong."

Solon did all he could. He pleaded, protested, and finally published a poetic rebuke to his complacent countrymen:

> If now you suffer, do not blame the Gods,
> For they are good, and all the fault is ours,
> All your weapons and powers you put into his hands,
> And now his slaves must do what he commands.

The Athenians gave up their arms and got tyranny in return. Some fled. Some died. The rest endured. But the lesson is eternal: Liberty and lethargy cannot coexist. If you will not fight to protect the right to keep and bear arms when it is threatened, you will submit to despotism when it is enthroned. ■

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THE REVIEW

Stopping the CO_2 Pipeline

by Selwyn Duke

***UNearthing the CO_2 Pipeline*,** by Stand Your Ground Studios, The John Birch Society, 2025, 54 minutes, DVD. To order, see page 32.

Is it "carbon capture" — or property rights, cash, and Constitution capture? This is the question explored, and answered, by the alarming new documentary *UNearthing the CO_2 Pipeline*. Produced by The John Birch Society and released on Earth Day (April 22), it warns of a man-made peril beneath the earth, one that could be coming to a town near you.

What is carbon capture (CC)? Grok AI puts it very succinctly, writing that it "is a process that traps carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from sources like power plants, industrial facilities, or directly from the air, preventing it from entering the atmosphere. The captured CO_2 is then stored underground, used in industrial processes, or converted into products." The pretext for it is combating "global warming," "climate change," "global climate disruption," or whatever the *nom du jour* will be when this essay is published. Of course, CO_2 — regularly called "carbon," which is like calling water "hydrogen" — is implicated in this repent-the-end-is-nigh, doomsayer scenario. Never mind that botanists pump the gas into their greenhouses because it facilitates plant growth. (Crop yields rise notably along with CO_2 levels.) Never mind that astrobiologist Jack O'Malley-James predicted in 2013 that life on Earth would end due to too *little* CO_2 (albeit in a billion years). Never mind that Bjørn Lomborg of the Copenhagen Consensus Center has predicted that lowering Earth's temperature one-third of one degree by this century's end would cost $100 trillion (which still may be lower than our national debt in 2100). Never mind that even the liberal *New York Times* admitted in 2016, reporting on a *Lancet* study, that "cold weather is responsible, directly or indirectly, for 17 times as many deaths as hot weather." And never mind that some scientists believe another ice age is approaching. There's carbon and cash to capture.

The carbon-capture pipeline (CCP) is a massive undertaking, too. The Department of Energy says 96,000 miles of CCP in the United States will be required to help meet Net Zero goals. Farmers in the Great Plains are even now battling a proposed $8.9 billion, 2,100 -mile project. Even more significantly, it is setting property-rights precedents that, turning the "man's home is his castle" principle on its head, could affect Americans coast to coast and from here to eternity.

Now, while Grok's CC definition may sound innocuous enough, *UNearthing* (UNE) explains that the pipeline scheme is anything but. It involves capturing CO_2 from industrial sources, compressing it, and then sending the "semi-liquid" hundreds of miles to an underground "amalgamation" area in North Dakota.

Ruptured pipeline in Satartia, Mississippi

The New American

The term "compressed" can get your attention. It sure got mine, reminding me of the can of Coke I left in my freezer too long (I'd wanted to cool it down quickly; I was a Coke addict at the time). Upon very gentle removal — I handled it like nitroglycerin — the ill-fated can exploded like a grenade. It created the kind of mess that after a long day's work would, were I not the testosterone-oozing culture warrior you know and love, have evoked tears. And sure, this may rightly bring a chuckle at my expense; unfortunately, when a CO_2 pipeline can't take the pressure, the result isn't even slightly comedic. This brings us to a story.

While CO_2 is a naturally occurring, life-giving gas, it can do more when compressed than just create schmutz. Just consider the Lake Nyos disaster.

Lake Nyos in Cameroon, Africa, is a deep, volcanic crater lake that on August 21, 1986 suddenly released a huge cloud of CO_2. Because the gas is heavier than oxygen, it displaced the latter. The result was that 1,700 people and countless animals suffocated to death in short order. Note here that the CO_2 had long been present in the lake's cold depths in, loosely put, a *compressed* state — much like it will be in the CCP. So does such a pipeline sound like a disaster waiting to happen?

It already has.

UNE recounts a fateful day in February 2020 when a CO_2 pipeline ruptured in the town of Satartia, Mississippi. Much as in Cameroon, people saw the ominous cloud and couldn't breathe; some collapsed in their homes, experiencing symptoms such as dizziness, nausea, disorientation, convulsions, and unconsciousness. If you were driving at the time, that didn't help you because cars stalled out (combustion requires oxygen). Note, too, that it took *four and a half hours* for the pipeline to empty.

Ultimately, at least 45 people were hospitalized, and hundreds had to be evacuated. No, it wasn't a Lake Nyos-level disaster but, well, "'We got lucky,' said Yazoo County Emergency Management Agency director Jack Willingham," reported the Freesoil Foundation in 2024. "'If the wind blew the other way, if it'd been later when people were sleeping, we would have had deaths.'" The foundation also points out that CO_2 "has long been used to euthanize laboratory rodents and other small animals" (though many now consider this inhumane). So its angel-of-death potential is well known.

Oh, and what caused the pipeline to burst? It was "normal seasonal flooding." The kicker:

The pipe ruptured again while being repaired just months later — necessitating yet another evacuation. This isn't surprising, as UNE informs that there are no federal regulations on CO_2 pipelines. Moreover, the CCP would be grandfathered in and *not subject to new safety regulations*.

This said, all human endeavor involves risk, and energy production-related matters are no exception. For example, accidents related to electricity generation from coal and oil account for 43 deaths per year, according to Our World in Data, but how many lives are saved annually by the same? The cost-benefit analysis is clear. But what of carbon capture and storage's (CCS's) risk? Does a cost-benefit analysis justify it?

Apropos here, environmentalist Nigel Calder warned in 1974 that the "threat of a new ice age must now stand alongside nuclear war as a likely source of wholesale death and misery for mankind." Now, UNE points out that global-warming doomsayers' prognostications have likewise been found wanting, causing them to rely instead on prevarication and ploy. For example, it talks about a certain legislative Trojan horse used to fund CCS. The documentary also illustrates how even fully effected the endeavor wouldn't be effective; why, it quotes warmist hell-raiser Al Gore himself throwing shade on it. In fact, both Left and Right agree that CCS won't lower temperatures, so where's the benefit?

And why is it full steam ahead?

Well, follow the money. UNE reveals, too, who's collecting our tax dollars through CCS (to the tune of billions), providing numbers and naming names. And how are these greentopian greenback chasers facilitating their business?

Well, hit films have been made, such as *Shane* (1953) and *Pale Rider* (1985), about powerful, greedy, big-money interests using strong-arm tactics to drive the little guys from their land. UNE exposes how the company building the CCP, Summit Carbon Solutions, has embraced this spirit — only, using not warfare but lawfare. It basically makes property owners, often ranchers and farmers, an offer "they can't refuse": Play ball with us, or we'll use eminent domain and do whatever we want.

UNE also reveals how state and some county governments, and judges, have been complicit in this, and how Summit will go nadir-low to achieve its ends. It preys on the vulnerable: widows, the weak, even a man suffering dementia. It uses bullying tactics and intimidation, threatening counties with legal action and even suing the deceased.

And once Summit gets what it wants, an easement or lease, it's the best of both worlds — for the company. That is, the landowners still pay the property taxes, but the company now has some control over the property. You may need their permission to build on the pipeline area; you may not be allowed to target shoot on your own land; and if, let's say, your tractor sinks a few feet in wet earth and disrupts the pipe-

line, you may be liable for any damages and deaths. In a nutshell, it's like a species of fascism: The land is still privately owned, but the company, abetted by the government, has some hold on it.

UNE provides, of course, many more details. The work is also replete with interviews with ranchers, farmers, and government officials, thus putting human faces on the oppression — and its opposition. The documentary explains as well, for example, how Summit

• is draining deep aquifers, necessary for agriculture, and how its actions could render that water impotable;

• destroys underground drainage systems;

• removes good food-producing land from agricultural use; and

• will use the liquefied CO_2 for fracking despite promising it wouldn't.

We also learn from UNE how the feds dealt with greentopian climate policy's unpopularity: Not at all constrained by the truth-in-advertising imperative, the government incentivized CC tech via the Inflation Reduction Act, which provided companies "cash in hand."

As bad as CCS is, however, even worse, asserts UNE, is that it's merely part of a much larger agenda than even just the fantastic goal of achieving "net zero" by 2050. Thus does the documentary also answer the following questions:

• How many decades of CCS "projects" are planned?

• What is "Agenda 2030," how does CCS intersect with it, what are its 17 goals, and what policy initiative is it masquerading as in the United States?

• What are "30 by 30" and "50 by 50," and how do they enter the equation?

• What are the "15-minute cities" greentopians want us all sardine-canned into?

• Is this really about the technocratic control and regionalization of government, the removal of private property rights, the undermining of individual liberties, the centralization of the food supply, and the "own nothing, be happy" principle?

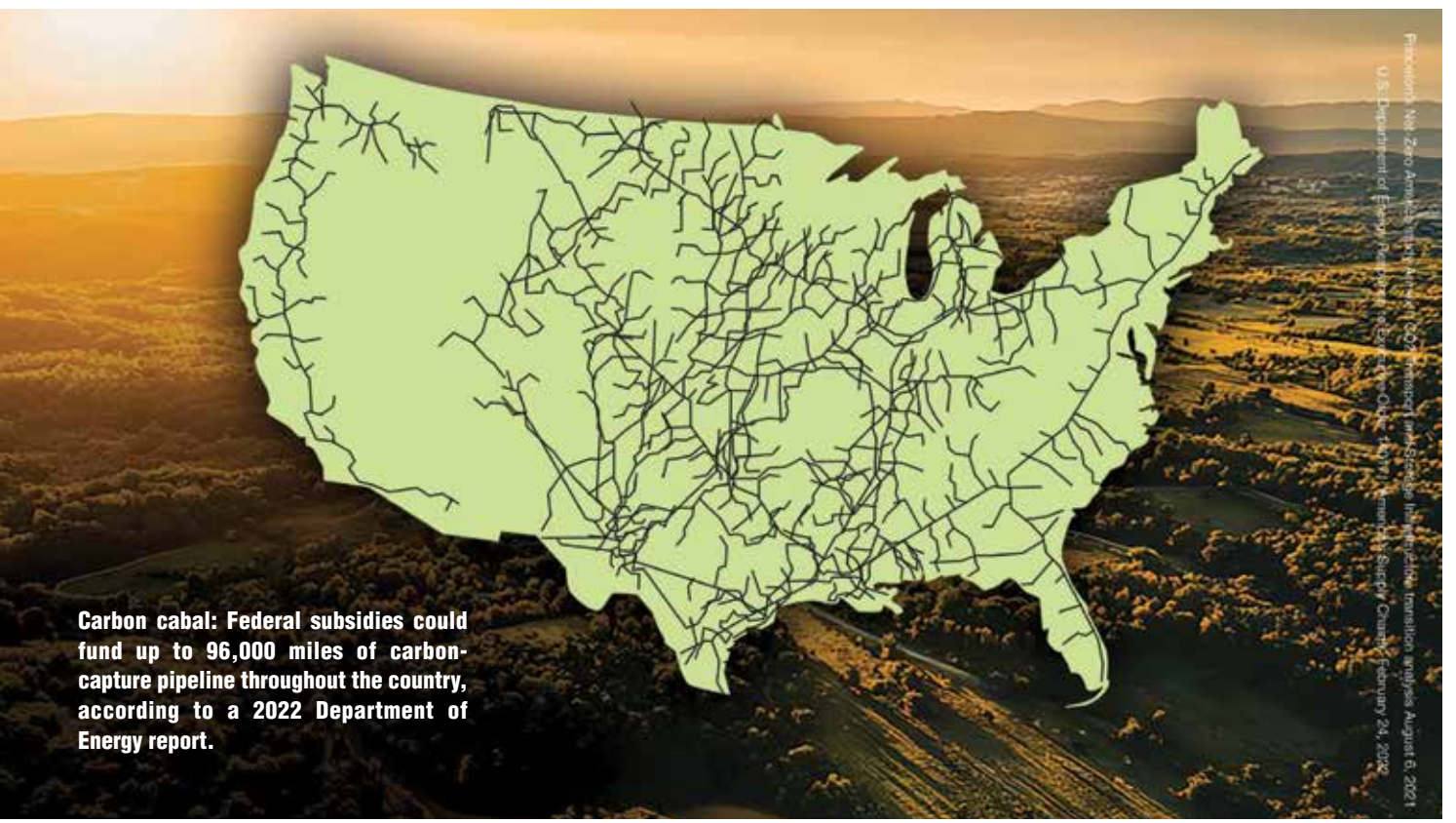
• Does the agenda even include attaining control over "what, when, and how you buy?"

That last bullet point sounds, of course, quite biblical. That is, the Book of Revelation warned nearly 2,000 years ago that a time would come when no one would "be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name." While this sounds ominous, however, don't run for the Prozac just yet, because UNE offers one more thing: hope.

The work explains how South Dakotans dealt CCS a blow via a referendum, and that Summit has had to delay the CCP's start-up date because of grassroots opposition. UNE also outlines how you can get involved, fight the good fight, and become another David helping to slay Goliath. It really is quite inspirational.

UNE is also very smartly made, polished, captivating, and cohesive, with no perceptible cinematic hamburger helper; there are no wasted words. One segment segues so beautifully to the next that it's sometimes hard to even conceptualize them as segments. The work moves quickly but is not rushed, is informationally sating but not overwhelming. The documentary is 54 minutes long.

UNE will alarm you, then arm you as it reminds us of a simple truth: You may not care about politics, but politics sure does care about you. If we're not vigilant, someday soon it may not be just America's purple mountain majesties that take our breath away. ■

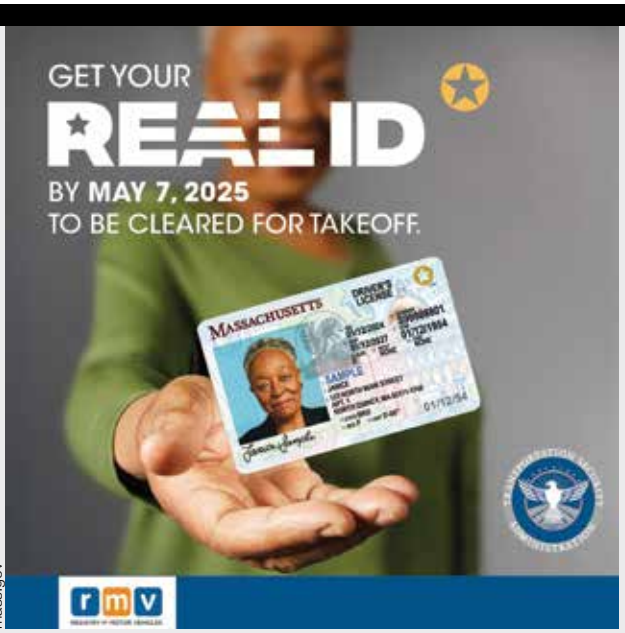


Carbon cabal: Federal subsidies could fund up to 96,000 miles of carbon-capture pipeline throughout the country, according to a 2022 Department of Energy report.

THE LAST WORD

The REAL ID Threat

by D. Michael DeRidder



mass.gov

As of May 7, 2025, under the direction of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem, Americans without REAL ID-compliant identification are barred from boarding domestic flights or entering federal buildings. This de facto national ID card, mandated by the 2005 REAL ID Act, enables widespread surveillance and undermines state sovereignty, threatening the constitutional liberties of every American.

Introduced by former Representative Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.) on January 26, 2005, the REAL ID Act passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law by President George W. Bush on May 11, 2005. It requires states to standardize driver's licenses into a national ID card linked to a centralized database. Like other post-9/11 measures, it erodes state sovereignty and prioritizes federal control over individual rights.

Sensenbrenner also authored the Patriot Act, which enabled the massive expansion of federal surveillance powers, allowing warrantless monitoring of Americans' communications, in violation of the Fourth Amendment.

The REAL ID Act exceeds Congress' authority under Article I, Section 8, and violates the 10th Amendment, which reserves to the states powers not delegated to the federal government. Driver's licenses are a state responsibility, yet REAL ID mandates compliance with federal standards by threatening to withhold federal funding.

States such as Maine and Utah initially resisted REAL ID, but eventually rescinded their opposition and complied after the federal government threatened to withhold highway funding, coercing compliance and exposing the federal government's tactics to circumvent state sovereignty.

Proponents, including the Trump administration, argue that REAL ID closes security gaps by standardizing IDs and preventing fraud, particularly in states issuing licenses to noncitizen immigrants, undermining election integrity and national security. Noem claims it will "keep our country safe" by preventing fraud and enhancing security. However, these justifications echo the flawed reasoning of the Patriot Act and other post-9/11 liberty-eroding measures.

Opposition to REAL ID is about adhering to the Constitution and protecting the rights of Americans — not denying the need for air travel and election security. The federal government has no constitutional authority to create a national identification system. By enforcing REAL ID, the Trump administration aligns itself with the same Deep State tactics it has often criticized, prioritizing control over liberty.

Former Representative Ron Paul (R-Texas) opposed the REAL ID Act in 2005, stating it creates a mandatory national ID: "With the utmost sincerity and a deep conviction, I am quite confident that this bill, if you vote for it, you will be voting for a national ID card. And I know some will argue against that, and they say this is voluntary, but it really can't be voluntary. If a state opts out, nobody's going to accept their driver's license, so this is not voluntary."

Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) noted REAL ID won't improve security, stating in a post on X, "Real ID isn't needed and won't stop terrorists from hijacking planes. Most of the 9/11 hijackers held Saudi, UAE, Egyptian, or Lebanese passports. Real ID is a national standard and database of IDs that is primarily a tool for control of Americans. Trump shouldn't enforce it."

The American Civil Liberties Union has similarly warned that REAL ID "would facilitate the tracking of data on individuals and bring government into the very center of every citizen's life. By definitively turning driver's licenses into a form of national identity documents, Real ID would have a tremendously destructive impact on privacy."

Americans must take action to oppose REAL ID enforcement. Urge your U.S. representative and senators to repeal this unconstitutional law, and urge your state legislators to nullify REAL ID. Remind elected officials of their oath to uphold the Constitution, not expand federal control. Ask them to join leaders such as Representative Thomas Massie in protecting our fundamental liberties and the government our Founders envisioned. ■

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